MARCH 1955

COMMENTARY

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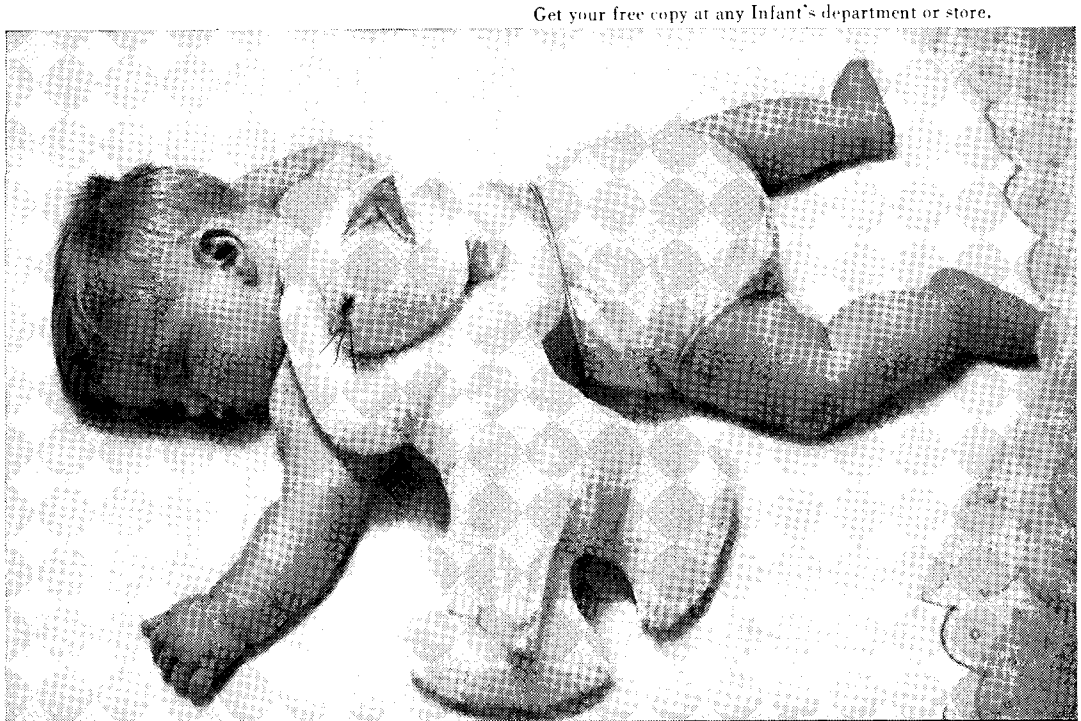

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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF

COMMENTARY

Israel and Her Arabs *Edwin Samuel*

Writing from many years of experience as official and resident of Palestine, during Mandate time and after, Mr. Samuel reports the poignant social and moral problems involved in Israel's relations with her Arab minority and in the issue of the Arab refugees, and gives a prognosis.

Generations *David Daiches*

Son of the late Rabbi Salis Daiches of Edinburgh, grandson of the distinguished Biblical scholar Rabbi Israel Hayim Daiches, and himself a noted literary critic and essayist, the author movingly sketches the changing Weltanschauung and role of three generations of a rabbinical family.

Return to Austria *Benno Weiser*

After more than fifteen years, an Austrian Jew, now an American, returns to the scenes of his youth and discovers, as he travels over postwar Austria, that he long ago ceased to be a Viennese, with all the rights, privileges, and heartaches which that process has entailed.

Tilton vs. Beecher *Algene Ballis*

The trial of Henry Ward Beecher for adultery in 1875 was one of the critical events in the cultural life of 19th-century America. Miss Ballis, reexamining the "Beecher Scandal" as seen through the eye of a *New Yorker* historian, finds it as revelatory a commentary on the values of our own time as on the manners and morals of that earlier day.

The Jewish Kafka *Clement Greenberg*

Franz Kafka, the much discussed and interpreted Jewish writer from Prague, did not come out of nowhere, nor do his neuroses account for all that is strange in his fiction. One of COMMENTARY's editors tries to show how essentially Jewish Kafka was, and how unstrange he can be made in terms of Jewish history.

A Visit to the Falasha Jews *Simon D. Messing*

An anthropologist describes his safari to the Falasha villages of Ethiopia, where the Black Jews are attempting to make a transition into more modern times and break out of the isolation and "backwardness" in which they have lived for centuries.

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COMMENTARY

THE STATE OF THE AMERICAN PROLETARIAT, 1955

Working Day and Living Time in Gary, Indiana

WARNER BLOOMBERG, JR.

How much human feeling, what abilities can a man retain in his thirtieth year who has made needle points or filed toothed wheels twelve hours every day from his early childhood, living all the while under the conditions forced upon the . . . proletarian? It is still the same thing since the introduction of steam. The worker's activity is made easy . . . but the work itself becomes unmeaning and monotonous to the last degree. It offers no field of mental activity, but claims just enough of his attention to keep him from thinking of anything else. And a sentence to such work . . . leaving him scarcely enough time to eat and sleep, none for physical exercise in the open air, or the enjoyment of nature, much less for mental activity, how can such a sentence help degrading a human being to the level of a brute?—FRIEDRICH ENGELS. "The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844."

"SO THAT'S a proletarian!" exclaimed a friend of mine. We were watching one of my neighbors giving his three small children rides on their new pony. My friend, a university professor, had come with his family for a day's visit to our home in a working-class suburb east of Gary, Indiana. He nodded in the direction of his own children. "They're wild about ponies and have been asking if we couldn't, perhaps, keep one in our basement. I've explained that they are very expensive and that we can't afford one. Now I'll have to tell them that ponies are owned only by bankers—and steelworkers!"

Of course, ponies are not quite standard equipment for the backyards of this community of millhands, but there are at least half a dozen of them within a couple of miles of where I live. That the young sons and daughters of factory workers should now enjoy what was once a symbol of the pleasures of children of the rich epitomizes

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A LARGE gap has opened up between the Marxian prophecies of the fate of the proletariat under advancing industrial capitalism and the actualities of American working-class life. Yet contemporary works not only of fiction and drama but of social and political thought show little awareness of it in depicting American working-class life, whether the writer is French, English, Indian—or American. WARNER BLOOMBERG, JR., a young sociologist, who has himself worked in many factories, here gives us a first-hand report of what it actually means to work and live in Gary, Indiana, one of America's most representative industrial centers. Mr. Bloomberg, an instructor in the social sciences at the University of Chicago, is a resident of Gary. He was born in Massillon, Ohio, in 1926. His past contributions to COMMENTARY include "Jew in the Factory" (November 1953) and "Gary's Industrial Workers as Full Citizens" (September 1954).

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the enormous changes that have come over the life of the American "proletariat," chiefly in the last twenty years.

GARY itself has existed for only half a century. During the first half of that period a turn in the mills for most of the employees was the sort of experience Marx and Engels had described: ". . . the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine . . . as the use of machinery and the division of labor increases, in the same proportion the burden of toil increases, whether by prolongation of the working hours, by increase of the work enacted in a given time, or by increased speed of the machinery. . . . Masses of laborers, crowded into factories, are organized like soldiers." A small proportion of highly skilled workers were exempted from this regime, but the great majority of Gary's millhands suffered the fate Marx had described: by the end of a work shift their only "capital"—their physical and mental energy—was depleted.

"I can remember how it was with Poppa," one of Gary's new generation told me recently as we sat talking in his comfortable six-room house. "Work and sleep—that was his whole life. Us kids hardly knew him. Except on Sunday. That was his day and everything and everybody else had to be arranged accordingly. That was the day when he could put on his shirt and tie and suit and go to church, go out and walk around and see his friends. It nearly killed Poppa if they ever made him work on a Sunday."

"Poppa" lived in one of the various ethnic "ghettos" that had been flung up on the flattened sand dunes stretching back from the new furnaces and mills. If one had mapped the residences of the different nationalities, of the various skill and pay categories, and of the several social-status groups, except for minor marginal overlappings the three maps would have coincided. In one part of town, at some distance from the mill, were the big homes of the top managers. Near the mill was "foreman's row," built by the company. And as far as possible from the "respectable people" was a little district of Negroes, the bottom of the labor pile.

Part of the tragedy of this social order was its apparent fixedness. As Marx observed, the deprived and exploited who formed the broad base of mass-production industry seemed to have no chance to make the kind of change in their style of life which is so much a part of what we mean by success. The ordinary worker traveled some distance each day, a few blocks or even a few miles, from the crowded flat he called home to the mill where he worked. But it was a trip out of one trap into another. It seemed almost certain that he would die where he had been born or had finally settled after the trip from Europe.

NOR has that stage of the industrial revolution about which Marx wrote so perceptively yet run its course. Especially in the great metropolitan agglomerations, there are still "proletarians," debased and exhausted by the work they must do in the factories, brutalized by the slums they live in.

I worked with them at one plant in Chicago which manufactured cardboard. All but a few of the hourly-paid production employees were Negroes, part of the wave of Southern black peasantry which swept northward into the industrial cities and towns during World War II. Now they were recapitulating the historic transformation of rural tenant into urban millhand that Engels described in England and elsewhere. Inevitably they received the worst housing, gained the most miserable jobs. One man said to me: "You gets more but it takes more, too. You can't come out ahead." He meant much that his limited vocabulary would not permit him to say with exactness. He had come hoping for a new way of life but found no broad boulevards, only twisted alleyways with countless dead ends. He shook his head. "Sometimes I says to my wife: You think we oughta go back? But we can't do that nohow." In the plant he was classified a "beaterman."

At one end of the great complex of inter-

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locked machinery which we served, the beatermen dumped huge bales of scrap paper piecemeal into the ever demanding vats of the churning beaters that made the paper pulp. Often we had to carry six- or seven-hundred-pound bales from the warehouse on two-wheeled handtrucks. Then, working singly or in pairs, we would cut the wires binding the mass of crushed and crumpled paper and cardboard scraps and tear out armfuls, heaving them into the steamy, seething vat.

"Just get ahead and you can take it easy for a while," the foreman told me when I started. But it proved almost impossible to do unless something went wrong up the line. We were grateful if we could get away from the routine once in a while for a few minutes of rest. Then we would sit by the open door of a fire escape, breathing the cool air from outside, watching the giant cockroaches that thrived on the warm, wet atmosphere and a diet of paper pulp.

After a while I was transferred to a "better job" at the other end of the huge set of machines. The man assigned to show me the ropes there, a tough and cynical young Negro, looked at my white skin and asked realistically: "When you gonna get a better job?"

I shrugged and replied, "This don't look too bad."

He laughed raucously. "We'll see, man."

We sat with our legs crowded under a low platform onto which cut pieces of cardboard flew from the machine before us. These "cards" ran as large as three feet by six, and were spewed out at us sometimes three or four in a second. Our job was to manipulate them in a split second so that they would settle down into a neat stack on the "table." Then other "cutterboys," as we were called, freed for a set period from this routine, pulled off eighty or a hundred pounds at a time and stacked them on skids for shipping, swinging them up as high as six feet as the pile grew.

The tall "finisher," from which the cards issued so rapidly, cut off our view of the rest of the machinery. But we knew it was there, a monstrous device a block long, some of it fifteen feet high; a roaring, hissing, clattering combination—cool and wet where the layers of paper pulp were formed, hot and steamy where the drying took place, and deafeningly noisy at our end. We had to keep up with the machine. The slightest slip and cards would get tangled up on the table, might pour off in a jumbled mass onto the floor. Then there would be hell to pay trying to get straightened out. And in papermaking you never turn off the machinery except for week-end shutdown or a major catastrophe.

So we put in our eight hours—catching and stacking, catching and stacking, catching and stacking. We ate during spare moments we might gain by "getting ahead" on the stacking job. But the food lay heavy in our stomachs for the rest of the turn. And always we would be waiting for the cry "Break!" which meant the ten-foot-wide strip of cardboard had torn somewhere in the dryer. This was the worst part of all.

We would rush into the concrete pit under the three levels of turning, steam-filled drums through which the paper wound for over half the total length of the machine. There the endlessly flowing sheet, its course now interrupted, would pile up and catch between the rolls. We had to pull it out by hand, grabbing and stamping flat the burning hot ribbon of cardboard that rushed upon us at nearly two hundred feet a minute. Always it seemed we would never clear the machinery so the rewinding job could be done. Stooped beneath the threatening, turning drums, breathing the steamy air, cursing the mechanical monster, the company, and each other, we would somehow beat back the misdirected flood of paper and set it running through the machinery as before. Then we would rush back to our jobs of catching and stacking the cards.

"Don't look at the clock more'n you can help," the tough-minded fellow who was breaking me in warned. But few of us could keep from watching how slowly the hands moved toward quitting time.

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YET, however long it may still persist, the machine-dominated factory job is an intermediate form destined to pass. In the long run it cannot survive—there are too many pressures. Unions demand higher and higher pay for truly miserable work. The logics of the engineers require smart machines for the routines which insult the intelligence of all but the mentally retarded employees. A more sophisticated management is aware that the "urbanization" and "Americanization" of farm and immigrant groups will wipe out the supply of "good" workers for such jobs. Slowly but surely we are coming into the age of the automatic device to replace the never automatic human being, of the powered fork-lift tractors, trucks, and "mules" to pick up and carry the heavy loads which have bent the backs and spirits of too many strong men.

In the Gary steel mill where I last worked, and where I had a variety of jobs, I saw how the new technology, the strength of the union, and the enlightenment of management were combining to make our working day an increasingly easy and even pleasant routine. There, too, are gigantic machines; there, too, the symmetrical shapes of those mechanical monsters provide a visual contrast to the awesome dissonance of their working noises. But while they tower above the worker, they do not dominate him.

Mike, a tall Irishman who lives down the road about a mile from me, is an "operator" on one of the four electrolytic lines in that mill, machine complexes which unwind coils of sheet steel, tin-plate them, and cut them into proper-sized pieces for shipping. At one end of "that son of a bitch," as Mike calls it, huge tractor-like devices pick up four- and five-ton coils, each containing thousands of feet of steel, and put them on platforms which, at the pull of a lever, transfer them onto big spindles that hold the coils like spools of thread. The metal ribbon, three or four feet wide, is pulled up and down over towers, through tanks, into and out of deep pits—and in the process cleaned by acid, alkali, water; plated with tin which is melted and annealed to the steel; coated with a protective chemical; cut into proper sizes with many imperfect pieces automatically rejected; and stacked on skids at the other end with the right number of sheets in each pile. Tractors take away the full skids to workers who wrap them for shipping. The machinery does its work at a rate of six to eight hundred feet a minute.

One evening I had paused in my routines of electrical maintenance to chat with Mike. We spent at least a little time on almost every turn arguing about politics. He was sitting just opposite the tall control board of instrument dials, buttons, and levers near the center of the machine complex. His crew of six had stations at various key points along the length of "that son of a bitch" and each controlled one of the sections while Mike coordinated the over-all operation. They would signal to each other with bells and lights. Whenever necessary, Mike would jump up and over to the board to make the desired adjustments. In the basement beneath us were panel after panel of electronic tubes and miles of wires, relays, and meters that made up the "nervous system" which regulated the dozens of generators, motors, and pumps, and the control system itself. These were the main concern of a motor inspector, the electrician who worked under him, and the electrician's helper—my job.

OURS was not the only conversation going on along the line at that time. Mack, who held down the stacking end, was talking—probably about cars—with the young electrician on our turn. One of the tractor drivers had just returned from the canteen with refreshments for the man at the other end and had stayed to talk for a few minutes. (On the day turns, of course, we had to keep up the appearance of somewhat more constant work activity in order to satisfy the big bosses.)

"Say, Bud," Mike interrupted our prophesying about the size of the Democratic vote in the coming election, "why don't you go over to the cafeteria and get the rest of us a cup of. . . ." Suddenly he leaped over to the control panel. Like all good operators

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he had been watching the machines and listening to their productive roar, more unconsciously than consciously, even while we talked; and he had sensed something going wrong at the instant it happened. Almost simultaneously he glanced at the instruments and the mechanisms around him, at the plate rushing by, and ran his thin, wiry hands across the controls, hurrying them from button to dial to switch. I waited, ready, to see if proper operations would be restored or if the huge machines would bang to a stop and Mike signal for electricians to hurry into the basement or for mechanics to go clambering up onto the superstructure.

So it went. On a few turns there were many breakdowns and we "worked like dogs." Occasionally week-end repair schedules were heavy. But most of the time those of us on maintenance, like those who drove the tractors and other transportation devices, had fairly easygoing routines and the chance to move about from one sociable situation to another while doing our jobs. In the factories Marx wrote about, maintenance workers made up a tiny elite corps, and the modern transportation crews were non-existent. In the modern steel mill such jobs employ half the work force. And even the men like Mike who must stay by their machines most of the time are seldom chained psychologically to the unalterable rhythms of the equipment.

There are occasional exceptions, a few remaining "real bad jobs." But, unless we hit an unusually hard shift or "doubled" (worked straight through for sixteen hours, an optional emergency procedure), almost all of us got home after eight hours in the plant with energy left for work on our houses or in the gardens, for watching television or reading without falling asleep, for visiting with friends, or for taking the kids for a ride on the pony. In this up-to-date factory, management's own time-study experts calculate five hours and forty-two minutes of actual work as the theoretical standard for most jobs. The rest of the eight hours, in their analysis, goes for lunch, waste motion, toilet, and "shooting the bull," as one of the stop-watch technicians defined a "social interaction" category.

Yet the mills in Gary break production records month after month and year after year—as long as the economy permits it. In the new factory, productivity results from making the machines rather than the men work ever faster and longer. Far from dominating their lives, the "working day" of these new-style mill hands is the base upon which they can build an increasing variety of new routines and enterprises that preoccupy their waking hours and sometimes give whole new orientations to their lives.

Not only the whole character of work in Gary's factories, but the social order of the city itself has been undergoing substantial change. Although the nationality groups remain well organized around a persistent, intense sense of identification that spans the gulf between generations, the ghettos have shrunk. If they are so inclined, most of the workers can realistically aspire to a home in the newer residential areas that keep shoving out into former swamps and farmlands within and at the edges of the city; and these contain representatives of various ethnic sub-communities. In the working-class suburbs such as the one where I now live the old collectivities have disintegrated.

These suburbs are developing rapidly in America, especially around the middle-sized and smaller industrial cities and towns. Most of the people who live in them, like my friends, are among the economically privileged of the working classes. They are employed in strongly unionized mass industries or in skilled crafts. But they are a very large group, and constantly growing.

Like my neighbor—who designed and built his own home and has since added a new dining room, a fireplace, and a basement recreation room—the people in our community have had money enough, or lacking money, ambition enough, to get beyond the pre-fab village near the city. Here, nine miles east of Gary, they end up with a lot whose landscaping is never quite completed, a garden that changes from year

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to year, a house that often gets its finishing touches—with luck—ten years or so after the foundations were laid. "Do it yourself" has long been a part of their life pattern.

Over on Proctor Road, about a mile from my house, you can still see the whole cycle of settlement. Proctor Road is one of our few "poor stretches" where some lots are too small and the "settlers" often have large families, little seniority, and less schooling. Many of them came from the Southern hill country—Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia—during the war. The most recent arrivals live in small trailers to which they have attached tar-paper shacks. Next comes either a basement or a more substantial one- or two-room "house." As time and money permit, they add a superstructure or a new room or wing, an inside toilet, shingles or brick facing on the outside, a fireplace.

"Ya gotta fight that time-money squeeze," one of the Proctor Road settlers complained to me. Then he grinned with a typical fatalistic amusement at his own predicament. "When I'm working six days I get my debts paid and something saved up but don't have time to start nothin' big. And when I get laid off I got all the time I need but don't dare start nothin' even if I got some money saved." He looked at his three-room house with its rough interior. "Sometimes I'd like to burn the bastard down!" Yet it was as big and as warm as the tenement flat into which he'd crowded his family in the city. "At least out here I can turn the kids into the yard instead of the street. And I got somethin' more'n rent receipts to show for what I put into it."

If he keeps up his determination and has just a little good luck, in time he will have a five- or six-room house with a nicely finished interior and a pretty yard. In our suburb some houses are "accumulated."

However such men must defer to the time-clock where their mill jobs are concerned, they lead lives closely tied up with the turning of the seasons and, during off hours, with the rising and setting of the sun. Hunting and fishing are seasonal pleasures easily accessible to all who want them, ancient pastimes with some utilitarian justification that every interested workman manages to afford. There is the pervasive yearly sequence of cleaning up the yard and burning off old leaves in early spring; then planting and outdoor projects on or around the house; next the almost ritual sitting out in the yard and "taking it easy" on the hottest, stickiest afternoons of summer that always precede harvest time. Fall usually finds the summer's projects behind schedule, so there is a flurry of extra work to get them done or to reach a stopping point before getting ready for winter. Late fall and winter, more than any other seasons, are the time for resting up a little, for sociable activities.

The industrial revolution destroyed old beliefs and traditions and may, as Marx insisted, have torn and rent the very fabric of life for peasants and former artisans recruited or drafted into the new industrial army. But out where we live much has been replaced or restored so that there is a "wholeness" to the patterns and the "feel" of daily life. Many of the workers in the pre-fab and mass-production housing projects, and even many well within Gary's environs, share the same kind of pleasing round of seasonal routine. Almost all the mill workers enjoy the annual sports cycle in which they have intense and expert interest—baseball, football, basketball, and then hockey and bowling in the winter. They have the time and money, now, to be devoted spectators, as well as the energy for playing on union or other club teams if they so desire.

MEN and women who punch time-clocks may be businessmen, promoters, sportsmen, and travelers, politicians, and leaders of clubs and community organizations in their off-hours.

Just after the long steel strike in 1952 I was talking in the locker room (that inevitable center of sociability) with one ragged-looking old fellow. He was small, stooped, with a gray, dried-up face and disintegrating teeth. His shirt and pants, as another inhabitant of our row of lockers once remarked, had "patches on the patches."

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"Well, how did you make out?" I asked him, giving the standard post-strike greeting.

"Oh, I did good," he replied. "Made more money than I do working here." I was surprised, of course, and asked how. "Worked in my drycleaning places," he explained. "I own a couple of 'em around town." He had started in the business ten years before and had mainly relatives working in them.

Others among the mill's employees have rental properties, sell insurance, engage in free-lance hauling with their own trucks, run grocery stores or lunch counters. One of the union's grievance committeemen has become "quite an operator" by promoting weekly wrestling matches at the local armory. More often than not the men carry on their businesses without giving up their factory jobs. Thus they keep a secure financial base—and their seniority—while enjoying or suffering the risks of the small entrepreneur. Sometimes success forces the worker to make a choice and he leaves the mill altogether to become fully a part of the world of little businessmen.

They do not always stay with the new vocation. Harry, a soft-spoken but intense fellow, had started with a trailer camp, added a motel, a filling station, and a small restaurant as profitable years went by. He became too successful as a businessman to afford the eight hours a day in the plant, and he quit. But after a few years he came back even though he had lost his seniority. "Business turn bad?" I asked him.

"No," he said. "I was making good money. But I kept working harder and harder, longer and longer, and worrying more and more." He paused to pour a cup of milk from his thermos. "I got stomach trouble—an ulcer—and ended up in the hospital. I was sick for a long time and the doc said I'd have to quit worrying."

Harry got rid of all his holdings except the trailer camp, which he still runs. He came back to his old department and now has a well-paying job. He works hard physically, sleeps soundly, but still has enough "business" on the outside to increase his income noticeably and provide extra interest in daily life.

Workers who sustain a sideline concern with business become involved with new ideas and new associations. They form friendships beyond the mill-working community, join middle-class civic organizations, learn the vocabulary and sometimes the voting habits of the little businessman. Very often their enterprises require the help of wives or older children, and families may be drawn together—or occasionally torn apart—over them.

Some of the men see activity within the union, or in the political roles it has helped create for its members, as a form of "business" from which they manage to extract a morally dubious "profit." But most of those who play the union or political "game" get their satisfactions from the use of energy and talents that can be given no adequate expression in the mill or in their ordinary life routines, and from whatever increased status and sense of power they gain.

A number of the men in the factory where I last worked were precinct captains, a few had run for office, and several who were strong figures within the union had become part of the behind-the-scenes power factions in the local Democratic party. However, the Gary workman is not now totally dependent upon the union for access to politics, any more than he is simply its puppet if he wins. One of my acquaintances displayed this attitude by announcing that he had run successfully for precinct committeeman, and adding: "Even though those PAC bums endorsed me!"

For some workers, like one who is a much-honored state representative, the political party rather than the union becomes a center of loyalty and a source of power. Like business, politics leads to new friendships and associations that cut across class, ethnic, and vocational lines. A man's style of life changes as he responds to the glamor and demands of this new pursuit. His family may enjoy and encourage this new identification. Oc-

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casionally, though, they cannot understand his new preoccupations and beliefs, while he finds his family dull or unfairly demanding in comparison with the men and women of the political world.

The active union man runs some of the same hazards as the politician. Much more than the mill-working politician, the union man's time for family life is diminished. He is more likely to travel—to various conventions throughout the year, to special schools and institutes, to bargaining conferences and grievance hearings. Both his social and his geographical horizons are pushed outward. "Family trouble," a perceptive local leader once remarked to me, "has been our occupational disease."

Some of the workers have wives who join them in union and political activity. One of these "union wives" blamed the women as well as the men for the effect of this rugged sideline on family relations. "If some of these women would get into activities with their men, they'd know more about what was going on and how to handle it sympathetically." With an understanding smile she added, "Besides, you got to know how to give a man just enough freedom, and just when to pull in the reins."

FORTUNATELY, many of the pursuits which can give new orientations to the worker's round of life are less hazardous than business, union, or politics. Carl, a tall, handsome fellow in one of the departments that prepared skids of sheet steel for shipping, made sports and sportsmanship a central interest. He had even been a proficient tennis player—a game which still enjoys relatively little popularity among the working classes—and now wore the white sweatband from his court days when banding steel in hot weather. "I'm getting too old to play very much of anything now," he told me, "but I do a lot more hunting and fishing and work with the 'Ikes.'" Since these were pre-Eisenhower times, I knew Carl meant the Izaak Walton League, a once middle-class association for conservation, wild-life preservation, fishing, and hunting, which quite a few of the mill hands in this area have joined. They spend many off hours improving the local clubhouse and preserve, sponsoring events for themselves and their children, and enjoying the fishing, boating, and shooting that are the club's stock in trade.

Traveling itself became a prized activity for some of the better-paid factory workers during the years of steady employment and high wages after wartime gasoline rationing ended. "Brownie," a slight man with high seniority and pay, told me about a recent vacation. He had had two weeks' paid time off and had added a third week at his own expense. "You know," he said as we washed the grease of the day's work off our hands, arms, and faces, "when I was your age I used to read where someone had gone on a big trip around the country. I marveled at it! That was a sign of great success—to be able to travel. I'd dream about it but I didn't think it could ever happen. And now I'm doing it. Me!" He had taken his family south to Florida, then north along the eastern seaboard to Washington, D.C. He was already planning a westward jaunt for the next year. A younger worker, engaged to marry a girl who worked in the factory, was planning a honeymoon in Bermuda.

NO DOUBT it is only a minority among the workers who can be said to have found, in their preoccupations outside the factory, wholly new grooves of interest. Yet this minority is showing the way to the rest, and there is no doubt that the whole "life of labor" is a much different thing from what it was twenty and thirty years ago. It becomes increasingly difficult to speak in broadly generalizing terms about the life of the workingman, as Marx with some validity could do in the middle of the last century or as commentators on the American industrial scene might speak about the early years in Gary.

If we are to perceive better where we are going, we need new questions that are commensurate with the realities of the new industrial working day. Today's mill hands

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can still use the aid of the intellectual in comprehending and making the most of their situation. But, as they come to enjoy more and more of the ever increasing largesse of our industrial productivity, the workers' problems increasingly are the same ones that beset and bedevil the rest of us. This ruins the field for those with messianic urges who could find fulfillment only from helping men and women brutalized by long hours and cruel machinery. It is also hard for some "friends of labor" to adjust to the fact that the workers, no longer downtrodden and by definition subordinate to their sympathizers, may provide as well as receive help in solving some of the basic problems of our developing social order—for instance, in such a thing as the "do it yourself" culture trait, which has been borrowed from the working classes by increasing numbers of middle-class people (including many intellectuals) and is proving to have psychological benefits at least equal to its economic value.

Suggestions of future leisure-time problems for the workers can be seen most clearly among the young recruits now entering the mills. They have inherited the tradition of the Saturday night explosion that derived from the days when it took a strong kind of fun—drink, women, a game, a fight—to push out of mind and feelings the after-image of a week on the job. Yet increasingly they can afford leisure all week long. Many of the young workers are less involved in "do it yourself" routines than their fathers, who got the habit over a period of years. At the same time the fathers control, and in consequence are often left to monopolize, such pursuits as union and political activity. The "hot rod" is one of the young people's solutions, a costly one and limited mainly to the unmarried.

ANOTHER sort of problem is presented by the "tradition of failure" that is deeply embedded in the culture of various factory-working groups, the fatalistic conviction that almost no one who starts as a mill-worker ever "succeeds." This can partially paralyze the worker's perception of the new and rewarding experiences that his own struggles have helped make available.

I remember yet another locker-room conversation with another "old-timer" whom I had told about a transfer I might get to a better job in a better department. His reaction was to say: "You're still young. If I was you, I'd get out of the mill while I could. What do you want to stay here for?"

I had heard this line so often that I decided to argue with it for once. "You've done okay by it, haven't you?"

"Hell no!" he exclaimed. "Nearly thirty years and what do I have to show?"

"What kind of home you got?"

"Oh, it's a nice place, all right. Out in Gordon Park. Six rooms. I moved out there a few years ago and it wasn't very old, then."

"How's your mortgage?"

"Hell, I'll have the place paid off 'fore too long. I did good when I sold my old place."

"What kind of car you driving now?"

He laughed. "Does a Buick make me a millionaire? I always wanted a big car, so I finally got one last year. It's a sweet job!"

"What about your kids?"

He looked a little puzzled. "What d'ya mean?"

We were dressed by this time and as we walked toward the gate he told me how his two daughters were married, quite satisfactorily from his point of view, while the older of two sons was almost through college with his help. "But that youngest punk of mine is goin' in the mill. He's bullheaded, like you. And he'll end up like me. Work all his life and when he's through, he'll still be just another millhand."

Allied with this "tradition of failure" is the worker's nagging sense of the precariousness of his gains. For many, the richer life has involved spending all they earn and running into debt, and they are somewhat less able than the middle class to sustain themselves in case of trouble. For many a prosperous worker, a period of illness or some other emergency can still be a very great disaster economically. And there hangs over them the image of the "old days," the idea that an economic recession might wipe out

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all at once the gains of the past decades and put them again at the mercy of impersonal and inimical "management." In time, this psychological insecurity may diminish as the workers come to realize increasingly that they have won their struggle for "a place in the sun," and that, by and large, the insecurities they must sustain are not qualitatively different from the insecurities that weigh on the rest of society.

But whether or not they need or receive help in seeing their achievements as success, whether or not we can adequately help them to perceive and point out future potentialities, these factory workers continue to push hard for a materially richer and more secure life. In the process they continue to reshape our whole society.

One evening, when I was riding home on the commuters' train from my job in Chicago, someone tapped me on the shoulder. I turned and saw sitting behind me a well-dressed man in his early or middle fifties. His shirt was somewhat rumpled (whose isn't by the end of the day?) and his tie was just a little nondescript to go with the fine brown suit and smooth gray hat.

"How you!" he exclaimed warmly, with an accent so thick I could hardly understand. "Say! I no see you long time. You come in, I look. Say, that him, I tell myself. How you?"

"Fine, fine," I replied, although I was thoroughly embarrassed since I had no idea who he was. "How are you?"

"Good, I good." He paused and I said nothing, still racking my brain for a hint as to his identity. Then he said, "Bill tell me you work Chicago, now. You got good job, eh? Better than mill."

Suddenly I knew. It was John, the old laborer in one of the departments where I'd worked for the better part of a year, a Rumanian who spoke little to anyone in the shop except some cronies who "understood the lingo." John, as I had known him, was always dressed in wretched old work-clothes, shuffling along behind a fork-lift tractor whose driver he helped in picking up and setting down stacks of sheet steel. A foreign creature, often seeming as strange in his ways as in his language. An utterly different image from this nice-looking, keen, and outgoing man with whom I was now talking.

"Were you in Chicago for the day?" I asked, wondering why he was on this train.

"No," John replied. "I come back from trip."

He explained during a long conversation that traveled a twisting path around the obstacles of his version of English and my incomprehension of his native tongue. This year he had qualified for three weeks' vacation with pay, which he had spent in Pittsburgh and New York.

"Visiting relatives?" I asked.

No, he told me, just seeing old friends, people he had known during the first months and years in this country, people with whom he had shared the long hard hours and dirty, crowded grayness of an Eastern mill town before coming to Gary. During the past ten years, as he had grown used to the reality of paid vacations, he had begun to promise himself that he would use one of those annual treats to see again some of the men he had kept in touch with by letters and postcards over the years.

But there was one with whom he had lost contact that he especially wanted to see. "A Jew. My best friend back then. We together all time. And you know, when I plan this trip, I say to Sam—you know, Sam with the delicatessen out where I live—how much I want to see this man. And I say his name, and Sam say: I know someone like that name in Pittsburgh. And it was him! So I go his house. And he open door and for minute he no know me. Then he say, John! John! And he grab me. I grab him and he cry, I cry. My old friend! I stay with that Jew three days. In Pittsburgh."

A little later I asked him how the trains running east were, now, recalling that some of them had been pretty bad during my student days. "Oh," said John, "I no take train. I go airplane. First time!" He grinned broadly. "Boy! She's good way go. I never go no more only airplane!"

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WILL HISTORY REPEAT ITSELF IN GERMANY?

Must the Bonn Republic Go the Way of Weimar?

F. R. ALLEMANN

TALKING to visitors from abroad about their impressions of Germany and reading the reports of foreign correspondents, one is struck most of all by the mistrust revealed. I do not mean the mistrust felt by people who are convinced that the Germans are, and are doomed to be aggressive, nationalistic, militaristic; who feel that any strengthening of Germany is dangerous to the world, and that the amazing capacity for economic reconstruction the Germans have displayed since 1945 is more a reason for fear than admiration. I mean those other, and more numerous, observers who, ready as they are to give the Germans the benefit of the doubt, are still suspicious of the "German miracle"—not the economic one as much as the less obvious and therefor more peculiar-looking political "miracle." I mean people like the American journalist who, on the night of the 1953 elections, said the returns were "too good to be true."

The reason for this suspicion is doubt as to the strength of a state synthetically created in the test tubes of occupation powers, and doubt as to the stability of a structure resting on admittedly "provisional" foundations, and whose creators themselves spoke originally, not of a state, but of a "fragment of a state." These doubts have one basic justification: as long as Germany remains divided, any German regime, no matter how secure internally, must rest on a precarious foundation. Pacts, treaties, and defense measures may give it external support, but they will not dispel the "German question."

Without national unification the Bonn Republic remains unstable to the extent that the center of gravity of the German national consciousness does not coincide with its center of consciousness as a political unit. To grasp this fundamental fact is to grasp the German reality, which is not altered by the fact that at the moment many West Germans, perhaps the majority of them, seem *in practice* quite ready to accept, if not the division, as such, of their country, at least its consequences.

BUT to point, as so many do, to the fate of the Weimar Republic as casting doubt on the solidity of the Bonn Republic, seems much less legitimate. The Weimar Republic was never popular; and so, people think, the Bonn Republic can never be either: for it is, like Weimar, the product of defeat. The

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AMONG the specters that haunt our times, none evokes more fearsome speculation than that of a revived ultra-nationalist Germany that will discard parliamentary forms and bring back militarism and totalitarian terror. It happened before, and the economic progress and political stability of the West Germans under Adenauer, far from stilling the sense of menace, has heightened it in many quarters. Today, with German rearmament and sovereignty all but a *fait accompli,* the situation seems even more packed with contradictions and unknown factors. In our series of appraisals of present-day West Germany from various points of view, we last month published "The Fragmented People That Is Germany," by Fritz Stern, who saw beneath her present stability a social and political fragmentation that seemed to bode ill for the future. FRITZ RENE ALLEMANN here discusses one of the most prevalent fears about Germany: that Bonn will go the way of the Weimar Republic, setting the stage, by its weakness, for another catastrophic overturn. Mr. Allemann is Swiss, and regular foreign correspondent of the Zurich *Tat,* as well as a steady contributor to the West Berlin *Der Monat.* This is his first appearance in COMMENTARY. In an early issue, we will print another study of Germany today, by Terence Prittie, with some special references to the present situation of German Jews.

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state that in 1918 took over the heritage of the Kaiser's empire was from the first permeated by reactionary elements and, with their connivance, was attacked and finally overthrown by radical and revolutionary forces that had never participated in it and had never accepted its legitimacy. So today people wait for a new Hugenberg and a new Hindenburg to cripple the "Second Republic" from within, and then betray it to a new von Papen and a new Hitler from outside. So compelling is this parallel that even the most sober and unprejudiced observer finds himself making unconscious associations and measuring Bonn by the standards and yardsticks of Weimar.

This tendency is increased by the fact that the constellation of political forces in Europe amid which the Weimar Republic lived from beginning to end is by no means a distant historical memory. In France, the Fourth Republic has in recent years lived under the threat of Communism and the latent danger of an alliance between the far left and the far right like that which, from 1930 to 1933, hamstrung and then destroyed parliamentary democracy in Germany. Nor is it certain yet that this danger has been eliminated. In Italy the last elections—plus the Montesi affair—signaled the beginning of a process that threatens to grind the "Center" between the millstones of Communism and Nenni socialism on one side and of monarchism and neo-Fascism on the other, just as the center in Germany in the early 30's was ground to pieces between Communism and the Nazis.

Can West Germany, West Germany alone, escape a similar fate? In a country with hardly any democratic tradition of its own—or, one might say, with hardly any unbroken political tradition—will democracy be able to maintain itself while all around in Europe parliamentary government grows increasingly shaky, even in countries where it has a long tradition?

Such questions are quite legitimate and understandable. As understandable as the fact that the stability of the new German state should seem a little enigmatic to political analysts and commentators, and strike them, for just that reason, as a kind of sinister calm before the storm. No storm is in sight, but German as well as foreign observers continue to be on the look-out for one.

In the October 1954 issue of the *Frankfurter Hefte*, Eugen Kogon, its editor, views with despair the prospect of German rearmament controlled only by the democratic forces of the Bonn Republic instead of by the fixed framework of the EDC. He is terrified by "so much empty self-confidence." "This Federal Republic—provisional through and through—is reckoned as stronger than the Germany of Weimar. Bonn is considered more powerful than Berlin was in its time!" The mere thought that Bonn can accomplish a work of national "integration" at which Weimar failed strikes a German "European" like Kogon as not only alarming but fantastic. Nor is Kogon the only one who feels this way. Many people, especially on the left, who are afraid of German rearmament have its internal rather than international risks in mind. Over and over one hears it said that Bonn is simply not strong enough to support a burden under which Weimar collapsed.

To the extent that this fear encourages foresight and alertness it is good and healthy. But it is still no warrant for defeatism. The arguments of those who weigh Bonn against Weimar and find it wanting are based on the false assumption that the democracies of 1918 and 1945 arose out of very similar situations. They overlook the deep changes, psychological even more than political, that have taken place in the German people. These changes reach deep into political life and the relation of the individual to the state.

Five years ago, when I had just arrived in Germany, it was, significantly, neither a politician nor a journalistic colleague who first opened my eyes to the German reality. It was Werner Heisenberg, the atomic physicist and Nobel prize-winner. The Germans, he told me then, had had their fill of revolution. With a thoroughness peculiar to them-

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selves, they had pursued the logic of revolution to its suicidal end. Now they no longer felt the need for things extraordinary, all they wanted now was quiet and the chance to work in peace, establish their households, raise their children, and enjoy a settled life. "Germany," Heisenberg told me, "is a burnt-out volcano. We have lived so long amid constant changes, upheavals, and unrest that we have only one wish left: to let things, if not altogether unendurable, stay just as they are!"

That was at the end of 1949, a few months after the first elections to the Bundestag, which gave the three Western occupation zones of Germany a common political representation, and a more or less common political life. The second Bundestag elections, a year and a half ago, struck me as an emphatic confirmation of Dr. Heisenberg's argument.

The results have been interpreted as a demonstration in favor of "Europe," as a personal tribute to Konrad Adenauer, as approval of a cautious and dexterous foreign policy, as grateful acknowledgment of the "economic miracle," and as a rejection of economic planning. All these interpretations are correct in part. But the whole truth lies deeper than the sum of these partial truths.

It is certainly undeniable that West Germans are convinced of the necessity for a European understanding, even if they still nurse much national and even nationalistic resentment. And in spite of many disappointments and false starts, they still believe that the only real guarantee for such an understanding lies in common European *institutions*. Furthermore, they see with a self-awareness not devoid of self-satisfaction how, nine years after the most catastrophic defeat a great state has suffered in modern times, their country is once again about to take her place in the front rank in Europe. For the first time, as their government assures them and as they can see with their own eyes, Germany, though defeated and still occupied, still without sovereignty and split into two parts, has won admission to a worldwide system of alliances, and thus broken out of an isolation that neither the Weimar Republic nor the incomparably stronger Imperial Germany had been able to crack. The West German rump state has, in a few years succeeded in becoming the wooed and respected partner of the American colossus.

Those Germans who regard with satisfaction, or even arrogance, the new role the Bonn Republic has assumed in world affairs are not blind to the fact that it has been made possible by a special set of historical circumstances. However, they also consider it the political achievement of the old man who has guided the young state over the last five years; and in voting for Adenauer's party on September 6 they signified their gratification with a foreign policy that has widened Bonn's freedom of political movement while regaining the confidence, or at least respect, of Germany's former enemies. But Adenauer's electoral victory was also due to his government's economic policy, which with the magic wand of economic freedom had brought prosperity more rapidly than anyone had expected. This has been no small factor in the present political situation in West Germany, where everybody remembers the cold and hunger before 1948.

But these internal and external successes could not have awakened the response they did had they not coincided with the new German temper, its new "conservatism." One can speak of "restoration," but the term neither adds nor detracts from the fact.

The opposition—not only the official and parliamentary opposition, which is Social Democratic, but the unofficial and unparliamentary opposition that draws its strength from the resentment of the defeated as well as from the mephitic ordure Hitler's Reich left behind in many hearts and minds—this opposition has complained loudly at the price that had to be paid for Bonn's external successes. Adenauer was charged with having won them at the cost of "national interests," and his government's policies have been branded as those of an "American satellite regime." And indeed Germany's new prosperity has been bought by a sacrifice that many Germans found harder than that

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of "national interests": by renouncing the social reforms of which so many Germans, even among the middle classes, had dreamed during the years of hardship right after 1945.

So far the German voter has judged the achievement worth the cost. He has done so because his reactions are still predominantly "conservative," because in his present mood he prefers the bird in hand—especially when it is so fat—to the two in the bush. He thinks "realistically" and cares less about ideas than accomplishments. The relatively deaf ear he turns to nationalist slogans as well as to plans for social reorganization only reflects his distrust of programs and revolutionary ideas in general. It reveals his preference for sober calculation as the way to avoid new upheavals. We have here the psychology of a post-revolutionary epoch, of a "return to the self," of the renunciation of myths.

The deepest meaning of the 1953 elections lay in that they revealed the mental and spiritual transformation of a people who no longer believed in visions and "greatness," but only in the tangible and near at hand. The volcano was indeed burnt out.

But the Weimar Republic, too, had its period of "stabilization," of economic reconstruction, and for a time it made slow but steady progress in foreign relations. This was between the ending of inflation in 1924 and the onset of the depression in 1929. And people voted then, too. However, the Reichstag elections of 1928, after Stresemann's successes at Locarno and Thoiry, after the era of the first German "economic miracle," and after a heavy influx of foreign credits, did not bring a strengthening of the conservative forces. Instead, they provided the Social Democratic party with the greatest electoral victory it knew between 1919 and the end of the Weimar Republic.

The elections of 1928 were held under conditions similar, both internally and externally, to those of 1953. But then it was the moderate left, in 1953 it was the right center that profited. More important, however, is the fact that even at that time, when the Weimar Republic stood at its zenith, a significant part of the German people had consciously seceded from the legal state, seeking either new forms of economic, social, and political organization, or else a restoration of the old forms that had collapsed in 1918. The Weimar Republic had indeed "stabilized" itself—but the subsoil of unrest and dissatisfaction, of deep insecurity, on which it did so must have been evident to anyone who could make sense of election returns.

One symptom of the situation was the strength of the Communists. Nowhere in the whole world outside Russia did the Comintern have such a well-organized and popularly supported party machine as in the Germany of the 1920's. Even after the crises of Weimar's first five years had been overcome, a majority or at least a very large minority of the workers in the crucial economic centers, especially the heavy industrial ones, followed the Communist party—at least as long as that party called them to the polls instead of the barricades. The Ruhr and the central industrial areas around Halle and Merseburg, Berlin, Hamburg, and the Mannheim-Ludwigshafen district were all strongholds of Communism.

Not that the Communists ever offered any real threat to the Weimar Republic after the first postwar days. Their threat then was as small—or smaller—than it was in France during the late 40's and early 50's when Communists controlled strong trade-union and important administrative positions, which they never did under the Weimar Republic; in Weimar Germany, the attraction of their ideas was greater than their organizational strength. But at the very least they had behind them at that time millions of men—and these men, refusing to recognize the Weimar regime as *their* government, stood apart from the democratic parties, angrily hoping for a social upheaval.

The Communist hold over the industrial proletariat under Weimar was matched by the bitter but in most cases latent hostility to the government of a considerable section of the German bourgeoisie. This was long before the Nazi tide began to rise. Whether these elements, which had once ardently

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backed the Empire, now thought of themselves as conservatives, pan-German nationalists, or "national liberals," they were in large measure just barely willing to accept the Republic as a legal entity whose government they would permit their representatives to participate in, and they were not ready at all to accept it as a political one with moral authority.

Attacks on the Weimar Republic as "anti-national" were by no means a prerogative of the extreme right alone, but the stock in trade of parties like the old German National party, and a considerable section of the German People's party, that were considered highly respectable. This "national opposition" often enough formed part of the government, and individuals in it continued to hold important positions in the executive apparatus of the government even when the parties to which they adhered were forced into parliamentary opposition. But the "national opposition" not only refused at bottom to accept the revolution of 1918; it refused also to admit that the defeat of 1918 had even happened, and offered a solid front against any policy which assumed its reality. The legend of the "stab in the back," the murder of Walther Rathenau, the vilification of the first President, Ebert, the furious resistance to Stresemann, an administration of justice that, in the name of the Republic, consciously and systematically undermined it—all these were the ways in which both the "national" and the radical right sabotaged the state.

THIS inner secession from the legal state of whole strata of the population with which the Weimar Republic had to contend from first to last has so far had no parallel in the Bonn Republic. Democracy and parliamentary government may be argued about, they may be exposed to dangers on many sides—but they are not *fought over* today in West Germany. This does not mean that the new state is firmly anchored in popular feeling. There are many Germans who are critical of everything the word "Bonn" stands for, who question it, and have no particular respect for it. But even where the Bonn Republic is not loved or respected, it is *accepted:* accepted indeed without warmth, coolly and calculatingly, perhaps even as a necessary evil—but accepted nevertheless. There is no longer a large and compact body of Germans who have isolated themselves from the government of their country and regard themselves as outside it.

In spite of powerful support from the Eastern zone, Communism has sunk to a mere sect—not least of all because the satellite regime on the other side of the Elbe offers the German people a daily demonstration of the reality of totalitarian bureaucracy. As for the radical right, nothing provided a better demonstration of its weakness than the helpless and hopeless collapse of the Socialist Reich party, the only neo-Nazi organization that could be taken halfway seriously, as soon as it was outlawed by the courts. Ideas may not be destroyed by court rulings, but the specters of ideas vanish at the first mere show of opposing power. And if "reaction" of the Hugenberg and Hindenburg type is not dead under Bonn, such reaction still acknowledges the Republic's reality and strength by the democratic and "European" disguise it assumes. It may try to subvert the state, but it has to don the mask of federal republicanism in the effort.

This makes a great difference between Bonn and the pre-Hitler period, perhaps a crucial one. It means that no real *counter-image* to the idea of Germany as a parliamentary democracy is any longer available—not because democracy has been adopted by the whole German people as a positive goal, but because it has been accepted by them as the existing *fact.*

That no counter-image, or counter-images, to democracy are now at hand by no means constitutes the only difference between Weimar and Bonn. The radical shifting of emphasis that has taken place in West Germany's domestic politics is more than a reflection of changes in the German mentality. It also reflects the fundamentally different international situation in which the Federal Republic finds itself.

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WEIMAR and Bonn were both products of national defeat, but their similarity in this respect ends right there. Weimar had to shoulder the blame for a lost war. Millions of Germans were convinced that the First World War had been lost in the rear, not at the front, and by a "betrayal"—by that "stab in the back of the fighting army" which became the mainstay of the propaganda of the anti-republican right. The fact that the Kaiser's armies still held large areas outside Germany's borders, and that revolution in the rear and surrender to the Allies came at the same moment, could only strengthen this false impression. It was as if the Weimar Republic was not so much the product as the cause of the defeat.

In this respect the Bonn Republic has an enormous advantage over Weimar. Responsibility for the German defeat rests squarely and unmistakably with the Nazi regime. Hitler's desperate attempt to stave off the declaration of bankruptcy to the last moment, and to continue a war already lost until Germany was totally destroyed, amounted to a capital crime against the German people. This crime became, in the aftermath, a guarantee for German *democracy* insofar as it settled the question of responsibility for defeat once and for all.

The Allied policy of "unconditional surrender" is said to have been a fatal error because it destroyed any chance of restoring a European balance of power. It is also claimed that this policy made it more difficult than ever for the German people to rise against National Socialism before the Allies intervened, and perhaps actually kept them from doing so. Whatever truth there may be in this, "unconditional surrender" did serve to make one thing clear beyond all doubt: that any post-Hitler government, though it might be burdened with the consequences of military defeat, would not have to bear the "guilt" for it: it was Hitler's own minions who surrendered.

The Weimar Republic was felt by many of its citizens to be a fall from a preceding high point of German power. The Bonn Republic was born of a similar fall, but its development as a political entity has by now become identified with a new consolidation of the country, even if it is only that of a rump one. Weimar had always to carry the heavy inheritance of the Empire out of which it was born. Bonn began out of nothing, but for this very reason its achievement looms all the more conspicuous and real in the eyes of its subjects. The very depth of the fall into which totalitarianism plunged the Germans makes the steep curve of their climb back seem all the more spectacular. And this climb back, it cannot be overstressed, is now inextricably connected in the German mind with democracy, parliamentary government, and constitutional legality. The totalitarian state became in 1945 the symbol of total catastrophe, and it has since then, moreover, become identified with foreign domination because of what has happened in the Eastern zone. Democracy, in contrast, stands out in the postwar experience of the Germans as the way to international as well as domestic liberation.

CERTAINLY, the significance of these comparisons between Bonn and Weimar should not be exaggerated. But it would be even wronger to overlook them. Today perhaps the majority of Germans are critical of the myth of the nation-state and extraordinarily receptive to the myth of Europe. Even those elements whose political habits of thought remain nationalist for the most part simply cannot avoid acknowledging that Germany's recovery as a *nation* took place, and could only do so, within the framework of Bonn. Under the Weimar Republic it might have seemed at times that a "national" policy could—perhaps had to—be compatible with enmity to the democratic state. Today German national feeling is inextricably linked with the existence of German democracy. The nation-state—and the German one especially—may have been rendered obsolete and anachronistic in Europe by historical events, but the fact that the Bonn Republic has managed to strengthen the international position of the German rump state precisely by a policy that aimed beyond the nation-

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state toward a pan-European future means a lot.

The consolidation of national "sovereignty" at this point in Germany's and Europe's history may not be an altogether unmitigated good, but from the standpoint of the stability of constitutional democracy in Germany, which is what concerns us here, it is all to the good that the conflict between a "national" policy and one of European amity and unity is taking place within the German state itself, and that the dividing line between the two parties does not coincide with that other line which divides loyalty to the legitimate state from secession.

It may be regrettable that the West German Social Democratic party should dissociate itself from the supra-national point of view and, in complete contradiction to its own spiritual traditions, inscribe "national restoration" on its banners at the same time that it fights against "social restoration." Yet this same Social Democratic party, in half-willing, half-unwilling opposition since 1949, offers by virtue of its own democratic traditions one of the surest supports of the federal-republican form of government. This fact is not altered by the Social Democrats' insistence on the provisional, fragmentary character of the West German government, or by their resistance to every attempt to identify the West German rump state with the German nation itself. In their own way the Socialists are working thereby to create a nationalist rallying ground *inside* German democracy, and to prevent the word "national" from being identified with the word "anti-democratic" as it used to be in Germany. This is of decisive importance in a time when the conflict between national and "supra-national" tendencies is far from settled.

As long as nationalist reaction survives in Germany, and is not totally dissolved in the idea of a united Europe, the future of German democracy will depend on its being able to link the forces of nationalism with the democratic process. That is to say: a strong, unambiguously democratic political force must be present that is able to formulate and represent a "national" policy, and not allow patriotism to become, as before, the monopoly of anti-democratic forces. This is the only sure guarantee that, even if the political pendulum should swing back towards nationalism, it will not break out of the legal framework of the German Federal Republic.

THE Bonn Republic seems better protected than Weimar in more than one way against such swings of the pendulum. The sharp differences between a government coalition and an opposition that, like itself, upholds the federal-republican form of government and its constitutional basis, provides incomparably more room than the Weimar Republic ever could for sharp fluctuations of public opinion. This means the possibility of containing a political, economic, or social crisis within orderly forms of political struggle. And this possibility is strengthened further by the fact that practically no political force of any importance exists in West Germany today—certainly no organized political force—that stands outside the legal state in open hostility to it. Nor can one speak, as under Weimar, of the spiritual secession from the state of whole strata of the German population.

Under the Weimar Republic the existence of democracy was assured—and even then only half assured—when a quite special political situation obtained: namely, when a coalition of Social Democrats, Catholic Center, and bourgeois liberals had sufficient support from the electorate to control the Reichstag. As soon as the pendulum of votes swung to the right or left of the midpoint of this coalition—or swung, as it usually did, simultaneously to the right *and* left of it—a democratic majority capable of governing was no longer possible, and the government was forced to seek support from groups like the German Nationalists that made no secret of their enmity to the legal state. Hindenburg's election as president of the Reich, and thus as defender of a constitution to which he was thoroughly indifferent if not hostile, was a symptom of this political

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instability, and of the narrowness of the foundation on which German democracy then rested. The Weimar Republic could be governed only when there was either no purely republican government or no partly republican opposition. This was true long before the crisis began that in the Reichstag elections of 1930 deprived the government of any parliamentary basis at all, and forced it on the path of rule by "emergency decrees" —that is, by authoritarian methods whose sole legal ground was provided by the president's emergency powers—and so on to the self-liquidation of democracy.

THE LATE Kurt Schumacher's action in 1949, when he deliberately decided to keep the Social Democratic party aloof from governmental responsibility—thereby forcing the Christian Democrats, in those days by no means a homogeneous group, into Adenauer's policy of the "bourgeois bloc"—has often been criticized, and frequently by Socialists themselves. This step unquestionably increased the inner tensions within the West German Republic and helped solidify the different political blocs to a degree that looked both unnecessary and exaggerated. But Schumacher's policy, whatever its risks, had and has one very great advantage. Behind the position occupied by a strong and predominantly democratic regime, it creates a reserve position occupied by an even more unquestionably democratic opposition. If the tide should turn against Adenauer and what he stands for, this democratic opposition would be in the position to attract the votes of the dissatisfied and hold them for democracy. In other words, the Socialists would be able to offer it a *democratic alternative* to present government policy.

The Weimar Republic was never able to offer this alternative in practice, and so when the great swing of 1930 came in the wake of the depression, it swept the whole structure of constitutional democracy away with it. There was simply nothing present on the political scene that might have channeled all the dissatisfaction and revolt aroused by economic catastrophe in the direction of a democratic change of government. Without a strong democratic opposition that could have made such a change of government possible, the very political foundations of the regime were destroyed in the end.

This is not to say that the Bonn Republic would be able to surmount unscathed a depression on the scale of that of 1929 simply because of its second line of democratic defense. Such optimism would require one to shut one's eyes to the real dangers inherent in the economic and social structure of West Germany. These dangers, which have increased since the 1920's, lie in the one-sidedness of a predominantly industrial economy largely dependent on exports, and in the social pressure exerted on this economy by a vastly swollen population. On the other hand, however, it should be borne in mind that makers of economic policy are today less helpless in the face of crisis than they were in 1929; and that the different political conditions offer Bonn a much better chance to avoid a disaster like that which overtook the Weimar Republic.

ALL this does not mean in the least that the Bonn Republic has the right to view its future with unclouded confidence. The West German state is faced with tasks and problems that involve many dangers. No one aware of the realities of the German scene will be inclined to shrug off the domestic and political risks of German rearmament—to say nothing of the international and military ones. But the fact that the waters ahead are sown with reefs does not mean that the Bonn Republic must inevitably come to grief on the same ones that the Weimar Republic shattered on in its wholly different course. Nothing can cloud the vision of the political navigator more than looking for imaginary dangers, and some of the dangers that were real for Weimar are imaginary today.

There is such a thing as frivolous optimism, but there is also an equally frivolous pessimism. Not to see and take account of the real opportunities can be just as hazardous as denying the real dangers.

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NORTH AFRICA'S DILEMMAS FOR AMERICAN JEWRY

Behind the Present Debate on Community Priorities

HAL LEHRMAN

YEAR after year since 1945, it has become increasingly evident that American Jewish fund-raising policies have influence far beyond the limits of the community and the borders of the United States—and that American Jewry's vast philanthropic responsibility to Jews elsewhere profoundly affects the patterns and direction of Jewish communal life here at home.

This year again, the leaders of American Jewish philanthropy are being dramatically summoned to make decisions of far-reaching consequence for new and ancient Jewish communities in the Old World. And once more, these great overseas needs loom vast in all considerations of program and expenditure for American Jewry itself.

This time, the issue is North Africa—where Jews have lived since Roman times at least. Numbering nearly a half-million souls today, they represent one of world Jewry's largest remaining hostages to fortune. They are caught squarely in the middle in the present crisis between France and the native independence movements.

Until now, the efforts of world—and especially American—Jewry have concentrated on relief, welfare, and education for the Jews of North Africa. Amid the present tension, these old needs continue but a new need—for large-scale Jewish emigration—has now been put on the agenda by community leaders in the United States and elsewhere.

As a result, difficult decisions have to be made—difficult not merely because the lives and status of such a great number of people are involved, but because of the grave political and diplomatic repercussions which participation by American Jewry in the North African situation—including even the very tone and content of the appeal made on behalf of Moroccan and Tunisian Jews from the platform and in the press—may have not only on the unfolding political struggle there, but in many other quarters of the globe, including America.

FRANCE has occupied Morocco more than forty years, and Tunisia for three-quarters of a century. She has been benevolent to the North African Jews; Arab nationalism, by and large, has not been malevolent. These attitudes could conceivably be accentuated, halted, or reversed as a result of Jewish activities, there and elsewhere. With the French and Arabs in mutual opposition, the native Jewries have hardly any radius of action in which to accommodate one side without offending the other. Indeed it seems easier, under current circumstances, for the Jews to offend both sides simultaneously than to win their joint approval.

That some action is nonetheless necessary seems to be the conviction of the various organizations concerned with Jewish status and security in today's world. The problem

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PROBABLY as remarkable as any feature of Jewish history in its various ages and places is the tradition of philanthropy, and nowhere has it flourished as in this country. The sense of responsibility for the welfare of Jews the world over seems to shape Jewish community life to a much greater extent in America than it ever did in Germany, Eastern Europe, or elsewhere. By that same fact, American Jews have been given a power—for which they never asked—over the fate of world Jewry such as no single Jewish community has had in a thousand years. The crisis in Morocco and Tunisia brings this fact home to us once more, and the story here by HAL LEHRMAN devotes itself to the debate now stirring the leadership of American Jewry as to how best to meet the crisis. What will be best for North African Jews *and* Israel, and how attain that best at the minimum risk both to other Jewish causes, and to the organized Jewish community life in the United States on which it all depends? Mr. Lehrman, one of the best-known and most authoritative reporters and lecturers on Jewish life and Jewish community problems, is the author of *Russia's Europe* (1947) and *Israel: The Beginning and Tomorrow* (1952).

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then arises: what action? Here, not only disagreements exist but confusion on all sides as to intentions, and even as to motives.

One group, for example, stresses the need for North African Jewry to stand firm as long as possible, while another stresses the need to emigrate as soon as possible. In the debate that has ensued all-out supporters of large-scale North African emigration sometimes suggest that those holding the opposite view may be primarily moved by the fear that Jewish flight from *any* part of the world automatically affects the stability of Jews in all other parts of the world—including their own. Those violently against the program for wholesale evacuation wonder if advocates of such mass action want North African Jews to go to Israel, not so much because they would be safer there, as because Israel would be safer with more manpower, or because exodus suits the classic Zionist assumption that all Jews outside Israel dwell in miserable exile. And some even suspect that there are those who want to make the emergency in North Africa look more critical than it is because that would wake up philanthropic givers jaded by staler cries of other emergencies.

There exists, too, a middle ground between such extremes of ideological and institutional motivation, and efforts are being made by men of good will of different beliefs or affiliations to meet in agreement on a sober and practical program. After all, the hallmark of organized American Jewish life is—as has often been said approvingly or reprovingly—its way of putting the practical above the ideological, and of finding methods, through compromise and negotiation, to reconcile conflicting interests. But at the moment the subject is highly sensitive, and far from resolved, and likely to become more delicate as the conflict between France and Arab nationalism lumbers towards solution or a deadlock in violence.

I WAS last in North Africa in January of 1954. At that time, as reported in these pages,* the Jews there felt neither secure nor unduly alarmed. Though few Jews felt themselves "at home" in the prevailing Moslem climate of social and political inequality, even fewer saw Israel as "home" or wanted really to go. The community as a whole was making progress—with encouragement and aid at first from the French, but more lately and largely from Western Jewry, especially American—toward a cultural transformation that looked almost miraculous.

The year 1948 had seen two remote events of prime importance for the Jews of North Africa. There was the substantial increase, by a decision in New York, of the American Joint Distribution Committee's hitherto small budget and program for North African operations. And there was the proclamation, in Tel Aviv, of an independent Israel.

Largest of the Jewish communities in Islam, and least cut off by Arab-Israeli hostilities, North Africa provided the first great wave of so-called "Oriental" immigration to the new state. Scattered anti-Jewish violence in isolated regions helped speed it, but the major factors were popular enthusiasm over the new state, encouragement from Zionist emissaries on the spot, and the presence of JDC and Jewish Agency facilities close by to process and handle the movement.

Even so, considering the great reservoir of possible applicants, the migration was scarcely spectacular. Compared with the 33,000 who eventually came from Libya, the 50,000 from Yemen, and the 120,000 from Iraq, virtually emptying those Arab states of their Jews, the 42,000 who arrived from the French North African territories between 1948 and 1951 represented barely 10 per cent of their Jewish population. Then, in mid-1951, Israeli policy toward prospective immigrants unable to finance their passage became very "selective" (except as to those from "crisis" countries—and North Africa was not so considered). From late 1951 to early 1954 the North African flow dwindled to a trickle, averaging under 2,000 yearly.

Israel's economy sorely needed the relief provided by the slackening of immigration. Moreover, it was no secret that the "old settlers" in Israel were less than enthusiastic over the North African contingent. To Israelis of European stock, the "Orientals" from the Algerian, Moroccan, and Tunisian ghettos seemed quite unrecognizable as Jews—unwashed, illiterate, alien, and deplorably ready to pull knives. Thus the North Africans were singled out for special mention as undesirables, and when Israel's door began

*"Morocco's Jews Enter the 20th Century," COMMENTARY, August and September 1954.

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to close only the narrowest chink was left for them. Standards of eligibility became extremely severe; even the places in North Africa where applicants could register grew rare and hard to find. The Jewish Agency, now entirely in charge of immigrant-processing and transportation, seemed nearly as eager to keep North Africans from emigrating as previously to persuade them to do so.

In turn, the North Africans resented the label of desperado, and the discriminations. Many found the reality of tents, tin shacks, thin rations, hard labor, and unemployment in Israel less agreeable than the milk and honey of the propagandists. Some thousands were sufficiently disenchanted to drift back to North Africa, bringing their bad news with them. Others sent the news by mail.

By the time of the writer's return to North Africa in early 1954, the shock of this disillusionment had softened. Israel was generally cherished and an object of pride. But, also, it was looked upon as a land more for tomorrow than for today. Zionist pioneer youth activity was developing in reaction to the Arab independence movement, somewhat like the *halutzim* movement that in Eastern Europe after 1918 had been spurred by the growth of Polish and other chauvinist nationalisms. But the strength of the movement in North Africa still could be counted only in the hundreds.

Many of the more affluent Jews of North Africa visited the new country—as tourists. Some had bought a parcel of land, even built a house or shop on it, and installed a poorer compatriot as overseer, and then gone home again. The investment was "insurance" for the future, not for now.

The bulk of North African Jews seemed disinclined to exchange the familiar hardships of the land of their birth for the unfamiliar but well-publicized hardships of the land of their ancestors. The dominant mood, even of those most sentimentally attached to Israel, was to wait until the dream had become more recognizable in the flesh.

This caution was also manifest among groups which, by all ordinary rules, might have been expected to welcome almost anything in exchange for their present plight. For example, there were the 40,000 Jews scattered in hundreds of villages and hamlets in the remote Moroccan hinterland. Even the French military worried about its inability to assure the safety of these people, hundreds of miles from a friendly garrison, without telephones, lonely and hard to reach in case of attack by their Moslem neighbors. Under JDC-Agency auspices, an experiment was being made in transplanting a few such villages—lock, stock, and barrel—to Israel. I visited one such community perched on a wild crag of the Atlas Mountains. Conditions of life were primitive beyond Western conception. These Jews assured me of their readiness to leave for the Holy Land, as scheduled, in a few weeks.

Yet, five months later, I learned, only four out of the thirty-five families in that village had gone even as far as the staging camp near the Moroccan coast. The rest were still huddled in their wretched—but familiar—huts. As one well-placed informant wrote me from Morocco: "The truth is that as long as the danger to the Jews in Morocco remains only a potential threat rather than an imminent actuality, there will be little movement in the direction of Israel."

I had noticed that such reluctance was more marked the nearer the Jews were to the protection of the French and—perhaps more important—to the Westernizing influences of foreign Jewish health, education, and welfare agencies. Stimulated by the JDC's presence and financial assistance, the programs of the Alliance Israélite schools, the OSE clinics, the ORT vocational training centers, and only functional institutions had mushroomed and multiplied since 1948. The result could be seen in the children, who were growing up as a literally new kind of North African Jew with wonderfully enlarged mental and spiritual outlook, and much stronger bodies.

The disease, poverty, and ignorance amid which their parents and grandparents lived were less amenable to change because the problem was physically so staggering in dimension. Yet here, too, seeds were sprouting: a dim perception of the value of hygiene and sanitation was evident, a mounting acceptance of doctors as angels instead of devils, even a willingness to submit to preventive medicine.

More significant, the recent years had witnessed great advances in Jewish communal strength and self-awareness. Bold housing projects outside the ghettos, a quicken-

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ing sense of local responsibility for financial support of communal institutions, close ties of federation among hitherto dispersed communities, and firmer representation of Jewish interests to the French and Moslem authorities—all these were giving North African Jewry a new voice in their own fate.

This does not mean that the status of Jewry had suddenly become lofty or even—by Western standards—tolerable. Tunisian Jewry, as a whole, like Tunisia itself, stood far ahead of Moroccan Jewry and Morocco in general political enlightenment and Arab-Jewish relations. (A liberal, Western-minded part of Tunisian Jewry was even recruited into the native independence movement.) But in both territories enormous ground remained to be covered before Jews could assure their dignity as Jews and as citizens. Only 50,000 of them held French nationality, a distinction which gave them security—as much security, at any rate, as other Frenchmen in North Africa. The rest of the 240,000 Jews in Morocco and 100,000 in Tunisia were subjects of Sultan or Bey. Fairly autonomous in religious affairs, they were unequal before the dominant Moslem law, discriminated against in public Moslem courts, barred from participation in the native civil service, and generally treated as less than second-class citizens.

Everybody realized that the way ahead was mined with dangers. Very few could have dared even think of venturing upon it without the protective presence of the French. But the significant thing is that local Jewish leaders were able to envisage further advance for Jews in North Africa, and were laying plans to achieve it.

JEWISH emancipation would have been difficult enough even if total peace had prevailed in North Africa. But the postwar years had seen increasing friction between the French authorities and Arab nationalism in both protectorates—a contest in which Jewry could move in its own behalf only at great risk.

To break the deadlock in Tunisia, Premier Pierre Mendès-France dramatically confronted the Bey in July with an offer of progressive but relatively swift local autonomy. When fresh terrorism promptly broke out in neglected Morocco, Mendès-France committed Paris to gradual basic reform in that territory, too. These offers were not a notice of abdication. In Tunisia, the French would retain control of military and foreign affairs. In Morocco, even restricted local self-government was to be slowly prepared. But the new policy did mean that, for the first time, autonomous Arab states in Tunisia and Morocco—with all that this could imply for their Jewish minorities—had become real political possibilities. This development was clouded at the outset when, on August 3, seven Jews were killed by Arab rioters in the Moroccan market town of Petitjean, midway between Meknes and Rabat.

The Petitjean pogrom seems to have been a blind act of mob frenzy, unpremeditated, without purpose, rather than an act of deliberate anti-Jewish policy. Nationalist spokesmen regretted and condemned it. Had it not occurred, uneasiness would still have swept the entire North African Jewish community because of the sudden possibility of Arab independence, which contained the threat of a nationalism ready to resort to violence against all non-Arabs. It was this prospect, rather than the pogrom itself, that brought an increase in registration for Israel and in actual departures.

True, in the months which followed, no major outbreaks involving Jews recurred, despite widespread terrorism against the French and their native supporters. This suggested a resolve among independence leaders not to compromise their position by irresponsible violence. But anti-Jewish propaganda of Arab League provenance seeped in from Cairo. Jews—merchants and others—were the frequent target of appeals or warnings to show "solidarity" with the independence movement. There were sporadic molestations of individual Jews. Willy-nilly, the Arabs did not allow the Jews to forget about Petitjean altogether.

OVERSEAS, the first reaction to Petitjean seemed even more calculated not to let North African—and American—Jews forget about it. Initial statements by Jewish Agency representatives—notably by S. Z. Shragai, immigration chief, and Zalman Shazar, member of the Agency's Executive—made it appear that North Africa might have to be emptied of Jews pell-mell. Moshe Kol, Youth Aliyah world chairman, came to New York

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to warn Hadassah that North African Jews "are living in a tinderbox that may explode at any moment." He outlined a plan to move "450,000 Jews" progressively to Israel, beginning with 75,000 children—one from each family. All this was a sudden reversal of previous policy, and led more than a few observers to suspect it might be due to something other than the objective facts of the North African situation. Was North African Jewry now so precious, perhaps, because hope was finally being abandoned for sizable immigration from Eastern Europe—or America? Or because murder in Morocco provided a stirring theme for fund campaigning? Fortunately, the first wild estimates of the numbers to be "saved" were quickly reduced, especially when Israelis murmured at the prospect of another "Oriental" deluge.

Toting up the projected costs, responsible Agency financiers settled on 30,000 as a workable total of North African immigrants who might come in annually without seriously rocking Israel's economy. At this writing, though the figure is now and then revised upward by unauthorized but prominent dignitaries, 30,000 remains the official Agency estimate for 1955. (Some 22,000 are expected from Morocco, 8,000 from Tunisia.) This assessment of the situation, and of the desires of the North African community, is probably fairly accurate as of this moment, but impossible to prove, and conditions could change with little warning.

Actual emigration figures seem more reliable than the number of registrants for emigration. Different offices give different figures. But we may accept the Agency certification, which shows that, while considerably less than 1,000 North Africans went to Israel in the first half of 1954, nearly 11,000 went in the second half when nervousness increased. This higher rate was not wholly due to higher tensions. Officially, the Agency stated that standards had been lowered only for applicants from isolated villages. (In February the Agency announced it would remove to Israel the total population—except for hard-core cases—of thirty-three communities in the Atlas Mountains.) But all other reports indicated that standards generally had been eased—mostly by eliminating a variety of ailments and diseases from the list of disqualifications. The principle now seemed to be that active breadwinners would be permitted to take even their invalided and incapacitated dependents with them. This automatically increased the number of eligible immigrants. Further, facilities in Israel were improved for the reception of North Africans. Instead of being consigned to purgatorial reception centers and work camps, better than 60 per cent of the new arrivals—those who had opted for farming or rural labor—were sent straight to specially prepared settlements with some housing, supplies of food, and opportunities for immediate employment. This, too, removed the hesitations of a number who had previously resisted migration.

Observers in North Africa reported, too, a mounting desire simply to get away. To leave North Africa for Israel was, after all, no small decision, and the relatively large number making that decision in the final six months of 1954 seemed impressive evidence of a new feeling in the air.

THERE was less agreement, however, on the precise significance, or even the accuracy, of registration statistics. In the first phase, reports from the Agency suggested a stampede to the registration offices. Well before the year's end, the figure of 80,000 was being widely circulated. By late December this had shrunk, in an official Agency count, to 52,000—although fresh thousands were assertedly inscribing their names every week. In January, the JDC was noting a total of 47,000. There were reports, too, that not all of these applications were entirely spontaneous. It appeared that the Agency was helping matters along by drumming up business, as it were. An Agency envoy had assertedly even gone into Algeria when nationalist disturbances flowed over into that country, and recruited immigrants for Israel from a territory which is an integral part of France. A total of 900 registrants between July and December was credited to Algeria.

Whatever the real number and the real motives, two things were plain: that a fair proportion of North African Jews would go to Israel when their turn came, and that others would draw back. It could not be claimed that all were eager to leave or, conversely, that registration was meaningless and showed merely an inclination to go at some vague future time rather than a readiness to go at once. One had no right to

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ignore either the uneasiness in the North African community or the tendency of many Jews to "register for the last boat" as insurance against the future. In the last analysis, everything depended on further political developments. Until these became clear, native Jewry could not make up its mind.

Especially so, since even expert and sophisticated observers could not make up theirs. There were too many variable factors. One of these—the tenure of the Mendès-France government—was eliminated during the writing of this article without in any way illuminating the obscurity. It seemed likely that, for a time at least, unrest would spread because of the reform Premier's fall. Would French-Arab negotiations now break down altogether? If the French sought peace, would they be willing to pay any price to keep from having to quit North Africa altogether, sacrificing Jewish security if necessary, or would they resolutely insist on guarantees for all minorities, for the Jews no less than for the French? How broadly would the French define "internal autonomy"? Would they, in Tunisia's case, grant Arab control over the national police, which would greatly increase Jewish vulnerability? In Morocco's more primitive case, would internal autonomy be so long in coming that the Jewish position could be adequately fortified in advance, or would it hurry an ultra-national native clique into power?

Today the Tunisian independence movement was led by progressives with Western ideas, the Moroccan by an Istiqlal party which deplored anti-Jewish acts. But tomorrow the moderate Neo-Destour group could be replaced by extremists in Tunisia, and Istiqlal, already sponsored by and committed to the Arab League, might drop the mask of conciliation toward Jewry when prudence ceased to be politic.

AMID these uncertainties, Jewry elsewhere, and particularly in the United States, stood equally unsure as to the best line of action. The same kind of questions beset Jews outside North Africa as those within.

For many the memory of the German holocaust was dominant. Could one be *sure* that a similar disaster might not occur in North Africa? Was it permissible simply to hope the crisis would pass, with the awful precedent of Nazism and its aftermath in mind? This time, the annual meeting of the United Jewish Appeal was told by overseas JDC chief Moses W. Beckelman, money was available, a place of refuge was available, and "there is still time." Who could guarantee that Jews would continue to be able to emigrate at will if and when Arab states emerged in North Africa?

But others asked whether Jews ought always to cut and run when their rights seemed jeopardized or inadequate? Was it not wiser—even more prudent—to be resolute and reject flight as a solution? All the more when the need for flight was not clearly demonstrable, while the bad effect such mass immigration would have on Israel's economy clearly was. Indeed, would not the creation of enlightened Arab states under French aegis be a factor of tremendous potential benefit for Israel? Might they not become a force for *good* in the Arab world, a bridge to Israeli-Arab reconciliation? If so, would not the building of that bridge be helped by the presence in Tunisia and Morocco of vigorous, alert, and self-reliant Jewish communities, themselves serving as a bridge of good relations between their countries and Israel?

BY NOW, such differences in American Jewish approach have crystallized into two main positions of moderation, one of them most authoritatively represented by the United Jewish Appeal and the JDC, for which the UJA collects funds, the other by the American Jewish Committee, which is historically dedicated to the safeguarding of the rights and position of Jews everywhere. Disagreements are not as sharp in actual policy as the rhetorical questions above might suggest. But they do exist. With the UJA-JDC, the emphasis is on the removal of Jews from possible danger at a rate of speed consistent with current North African political realities and Israel's absorptive capacity; with the AJC, on resistance to that danger and action looking to eliminate it through diplomatic representations and mobilization of world opinion to secure North African Jews the kind of rights that would guarantee security, and facilitate integration with their countries.

The UJA—at its top levels—is opposed to panic exodus. It believes—like the AJC—that speeches here crying out for funds to

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finance large-scale evacuation could unnerve the Jews of North Africa and send them into uncontrollable flight; could embarrass and alienate the French by implying that they were incapable of protecting the Jews, thus weakening France's position vis-à-vis the nationalists; could antagonize the nationalists by assuming Arab hostility before the Arabs themselves proclaimed it. The result might well be to make real perils that are now only hypothetical.

Nor does the UJA feel that North Africa must be written off as an area of Jewish habitation. More money is being budgeted this year than ever for work by JDC, the Alliance, and other agencies *inside* North Africa. The consequent improvement of native Jewry's health, outlook, and skills is seen not only as facilitating the integration into Israel of those who eventually migrate there but also as improving the lives of those who remain. The UJA emphatically does not share the view of those well-intentioned but uninformed visitors who, after a brief excursion through the North African ghettos, come out wringing their hands and shouting for the immediate rescue of hundreds of thousands from such grim misery—misery which has existed for centuries and is now being substantially reduced.

But the UJA does believe that a controlled, orderly immigration of as many as desire to go is feasible and necessary. The *mellahs* are overcrowded; any removal to Israel benefits those who go and those who stay. Present unrest is causing a severe economic depression in which native Jewry shares. When Arab statehood is achieved, the Jews' economic position—especially the professional and mercantile classes—is bound to be adversely affected by Moslem competition. With the new *mellah* generation rapidly growing literate, more and more Jews would become frustrated candidates for white-collar employment in a Moslem-controlled state. Israel needs more population and skills. Finally, every Jew snatched from an area of possible danger reduces the numbers of Jews left exposed, and even reduces the possibility of the danger itself.

The advocates of emigration hold that now is the moment to act, while there is time and freedom of movement enough to permit both emigration and preparation for reception and integration in Israel. It seems to them obvious wisdom to forestall another disaster like the Iraqi one, when 120,000 Jews in fourteen months were evacuated by ransom and forfeit, and dumped, impoverished and unequipped, into an Israel not ready for them. The charge for settlement in Israel of 30,000 North Africans this year—some 5,000 families, of whom more than half are expected to go on the land—is estimated at $30 million. The UJA is asking American Jews to contribute as much of this as possible.

Since $30 million is around 50 per cent of the total which the UJA obtained in 1954 for *all* purposes, it is hardly likely to be collected. Therefore the Israeli government and the Jewish Agency—which is a major recipient of UJA funds—are prepared to delay Israel's national economic stabilization and divert money from other projects. Already plans have been postponed to liquidate the surviving *maabaroth* at a cost of $12 million; an estimated 60,000 persons will be compelled to continue inhabiting these unproductive "work" camps.

Just as the UJA does not deny the possibility of Jewish survival in North Africa, critics of the UJA view do not contest the need for helping Jews go who want to go. The American Jewish Committee, as this writer understands its position, is far from persuaded that everything is, or is going to be, safe and sound in North Africa. In fact, when an AJC mission of Irving Engel, Jacob Blaustein, and John Slawson came home last November after meetings with French, Arab, and Jewish spokesmen in Paris, Tunisia, and Morocco, its first public statements emphasized the handicaps under which a majority of North African Jews live and the risks to which they are exposed. Nor does the Committee contend that Israel is not justified in seeking to increase her population, nor has it ever contended that the UJA is not entitled to obtain adequate funds for the relief, welfare, and upbuilding of Israel and other Jewries overseas.

But the AJC does maintain that emigration cannot be *the* solution for the whole North African problem. It declares, first, that the departure of 30,000 this year can have little impact on that problem. Even if 30,000 left every year for the next ten, the problem would still persist because the high

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birth rate would fill a substantial part of the vacancies. Barring the mass exodus, which nobody recommends, or a mass extermination, for which not the slightest present evidence of intention exists, there will always be Jews in Morocco and Tunisia. And the great likelihood is, says the AJC, that their number will be substantial.

Consequently, one must work to help the Jews who remain in North Africa obtain full freedom and security. This aim can hardly be furthered by publicity asking for millions of dollars to remove these Jews. (Anxiety about such publicity has reportedly been expressed by North African Jewish communal leaders.) The AJC does not know for certain, any more than anybody else, whether or not full freedom for Jews will be attained under possible Arab independence, but feels it has the duty to keep trying.

The AJC view is that American Jewish policy should be adjusted to realities instead of speculative prognoses, and that the present facts, both menacing and encouraging, call for a careful and balanced weighing and analysis, and for steady contact with all elements of influence in the problem: the French, the Department of State, native Jewish spokesmen—and Arab nationalists. It contends that native Jewry is entitled to full equality of rights without religious distinction—equality, among other things, in citizenship, in government aid for religious and welfare institutions, in the law courts, in education, in voting for or holding public office, and in free movement and free emigration. Guarantees of this equality should be the responsibility of the French as well as of future native "home rule" regimes. The most encouraging development to date, according to report, is the inclusion of such guarantees in a Tunisian-French convention accepted as basis for negotiation by *both* sides, and in the declared willingness of Moroccan nationalist leaders to do the same.

AT THE moment, French-Tunisian parleys are dragging. In Morocco the stalemate is even greater, because neither camp will give ground in the quarrel over the Sultan, whom the French deposed last year. Now that Mendès-France is out, prospects for a settlement seem to have been set back dangerously. But sooner or later, it is felt, necessity will force a resumption of the French effort at some *modus vivendi* in both territories. Guarantees of Jewish security will then be on the agenda.

How dependable would such pledges be? The AJC has naturally not said so, but it is this writer's belief that France's continued presence in North Africa must be the prime capital backing all promises. If the French should ever leave, the value of these guarantees would have to be reexamined. Yet, under present circumstances, France's departure seems virtually inconceivable. Algeria—with all of its 140,000 Jews in possession of French citizenship—is a vital extension of France. With Tunisia and Morocco surrendered, Algeria would become untenable. So would the position of two million Frenchmen in North Africa.

That France is being gradually cut out of Indo-China is no precedent for North Africa. The latter is not remote from France, has not been bleeding France dry of men and treasure, has no Communist armies and guerrillas, does not lie at the back door of Red China. There is no need for France to surrender here—and no possibility of her surrendering unless she is pathetically resigned to sinking to the level of a third-class power. There is need, however, for her to exercise statesmanship, the quality of which is the main unknown factor in the equation wherein the fate of native Jewry lies contained.

APART from a few partisan zealots, those who call for emigration would privately subscribe to this analysis and to the AJC's formula. The UJA agrees that the present situation is fluid rather than desperate—and believes, therefore, that it may take five to ten or fifteen years for the North African pattern to harden for good or evil. This is why, in effect, the UJA feels it can plan an orderly emigration of moderate size.

But the UJA's main concern is rescue, and the AJC's main concern is safeguarding the rights and prospects of existent communities. Rescue implies a pessimistic attitude about those who are not rescued, while defense implies optimism about those who remain.

From the "stand fast and struggle" point of view, UJA fund-raisers are felt to hurt North African defense if they raise a clamor over the "dangers" which make emigration necessary. From the rescue point of view,

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the AJC risks interfering with North African rescue if it dilates on the possibilities of peace and, by soft-pedaling the existence of a desire to emigrate, creates the impression that emigration is being artificially stimulated and that funds are not really needed for rescue purposes.

In any case, the problem is so serious and divergence so real that the two sides have felt impelled to confer with each other on how to dispel it. The UJA has given assurances that it will refrain from loud blowing of the emigration horn in public. And at its annual meeting in January, the AJC wrote into a resolution on North Africa a clause to the effect that some Jews had already chosen emigration, thus recognizing that there were bona fide fugitives. It is to be hoped that efforts to reduce the friction will continue, since it can only intensify the real crisis that both agencies are trying to allay: the insecurity of an important Jewish community.

But when one examines the problem itself of raising funds to help this North African community, without at the same time "raising the roof," certain obstacles become clear.

To begin with, it may be hard to persuade American Jews that North African Jews should be any special concern of theirs. Those who gave generously in the early years for European Jews in the DP camps, responding to the "Bring Them Home" slogan, did so on the whole because they felt that the settlement of such refugees in Israel had a certain fitness entirely apart from any Zionist implications. They do not feel the same association between North Africans and Israel. And they are even less able to detect Jewish kinship between North Africans and themselves.

Ironically, this is due in large measure to a failure in American community education on the part of the UJA and those agencies—the JDC, ORT, Alliance, and others—which have at the same time worked so well in recent years to make North African Jews recognizable to us as Jews.

When the Moroccans and Tunisians first became UJA themes in the late 1940's, the emphasis was wholly on their misery and degradation, and this approach, justified in the beginning, has continued to be the dominant one despite the great progress made with the funds donated to combat the misery in the *mellahs*. If the dramatic story of the progress had been told as adequately from campaign platforms as the story of misery, American Jews might by now be beginning to feel some sense of kinship with these Jews of Casablanca and Bizerta. Instead, the harping on disease, "backwardness," and despair has made the North African community seem more Arab than Jewish, alien, repugnant, and centuries removed. With the average contributor still finding it hard to identify himself with the denizens of Marrakech, one can foresee some difficulty in persuading him to increase his gift this year in order to bring them to Israel.

And it is one thing for the national UJA leadership to reject "panic" propaganda, but quite another for campaign workers in the grass roots to restrain themselves. (Even the UJA and JDC—in recent national meetings and current official literature—have been unable altogether to avoid talk of "emergency," and "danger," and "cold terror.") Right or wrong, fund-raisers consider menace a more effective means than understanding for reaching the mind and purse. As the message of "danger" filters down to the local communities, the calmness and sobriety planned for by national headquarters is likely to evaporate, leaving only the stark cry of "crisis."

As a matter of fact, it is crisis to which every postwar appeal has been keyed. However, each year it has become increasingly difficult to keep up emotional momentum. The Arab-Israeli war was more stirring than the flight of the Yemenites, or even the recent border incidents. Economic troubles, while as urgent and deserving of remedy as more obvious threats to Israel's security, were harder to expound to audiences than gunfire. The excitement provoked by Soviet anti-Semitism petered out early, while the more constructive appeal of Negev development or immigrant colonization fell flat. With campaigners today needing a resonant rallying cry, North Africa offers itself. Transportation of a few thousand would-be settlers is not a dramatic theme. Rescue of a whole community is. As word gets around that more pledges were elicited in Community X by waving the bloody shirt than in Community Y by discussing a complex situation, orders from headquarters will have

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increasingly less effect on the tide of oratory.

EFFORTS to restrain the temper of the North African appeal will be further impeded, it is feared, by UJA anxiety over the size to which its receipts from centralized fund-raising have shrunk. When total collections were skyrocketing in the first postwar years under the stimulus of poignant need overseas, the UJA was appropriately given the lion's share of each annual increase. When the slump set in after the peak year of 1948, the UJA was required to bear the brunt. For a time, at the outset of the lean years, sharp dispute flared between overseas and domestic advocates. Generally, the latter won out because of the already long deferment of local programs and the waning of the intensity of emotion for overseas causes as the rescue and relief emergency tapered off. Fought out in each community, the argument on the national level began to diminish in heat in 1951 with arrival of more moderate and community-minded pilots at the UJA helm. Though the UJA percentage of the total collections made by the central fund-raising apparatus went on dropping, the rate of descent slowed, then leveled; by 1953 it was even starting to turn slightly upward.*

But the debate is now warming again. The welfare funds on which the UJA depends continue to lose in total revenue. Meanwhile many new local institutions have developed whose budgets constitute an added claim on the central campaign's dwindling receipts. It is in this context that overseas adherents have come forward with the contention that needs of Jewry abroad have again grown pressing enough to be restored to "priority" status.

The first sign of the storm was a surprise foray at the General Assembly, in November, of the Council of Federations and Welfare Funds by Dr. Joseph J. Schwartz. Universally esteemed for his quiet effectiveness and moderation, the UJA's executive vice-chairman bluntly told the lay and professional leaders of American Jewish philanthropy that the community, having "largely met" its more urgent local problems and building programs, would "have to begin to reexamine the priorities," put off "anything that can possibly be delayed," and give proper place to desperate overseas needs. He summoned them to "think once more . . . of saving lives," to restore the claims of Jewry abroad to the emergency status they held in the years when "people were in danger." He described as a "must program" the plan to "create an avenue of escape" for North African Jews, and bring 30,000 to Israel in 1955 as "the absolute minimum." This, he said, "is not a program which can be debated." He called on the community to "have the maturity and understanding" to revise its priorities accordingly.

A month later, delegates to the UJA's own conference in New York joined the attack. Fire was directed at communities that were still cutting their overseas percentages while leaving local budgets undisturbed, and at a welfare-fund structure which was failing to yield the UJA adequate revenue. There were angry cries for "a fairer share" and for introduction into all communities of a system of advance allocations known as "pre-campaign budgeting," a device which tends to protect the UJA from decreased allocations. The emotional justification for such cries was the North African need. "Do we have the right to say to Tunisian and Moroccan Jews," one speaker wanted to know, "that they should not be saved as other Jews have been saved?" There was even a flurry of threats, quickly disavowed by the leadership, that independent campaigns might be launched outside those communal welfare funds where "greed and stubbornness" prevailed.

But it would seem to many that the problem goes far beyond the relatively narrow frame of relations inside the central fund-raising apparatus. Outside the apparatus a wide and bewildering variety of Jewish causes has burgeoned. Among these are numbers of domestic agencies, local and national; and, in a few cities, national agencies traditionally within the central drives, but now raising funds separately. Further complicating the picture are many large "independent" drives for needs centered overseas and in Israel that function separately from the UJA. The welfare funds in a number of cities seem almost to have become just another among many separate drives, the collections

*See this author's "Jewish Giving Is Coming of Age," in the July 1953 number of COMMENTARY.

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of the centralized apparatus just a fraction of the sprawling total. In view of all this, the criticism by the UJA should, many feel, not be aimed against the central funds; rather, the UJA should align itself with the central funds against encroachment by independent efforts.

Such diversification in fund-raising appeals has lately been described as a "jungle." It is not clear, however, whether this is good or bad for American Jewry. A jungle may be tangled and treacherous, but there are jungles which are richer and more edifying than neat gardens. In any case, we seem further away than ever from achieving that total "unity" of the community for which in latter years a coalition of the efficiency-minded and the ideologically-minded has been strongly pressing.

This coalition has contended that, for a necessary curb on the "chaotic" growth of communal interests and activities, we must look to unity through disciplined control, nationally enforced on the allocations and perhaps even on the budgets and programs of the various agencies. It is oddly significant that many of those advocating a monolithic community in the United States have tended themselves to be "nationalist," focusing their ardor on a politically organized Jewish peoplehood, rather than relying on the voluntary community pattern developed here to meet group welfare needs.

There is no conclusive evidence that the debate provoked by the "unity" advocates actually precipitated the fund-raising free-for-all that ensued. But whatever the reason, the fact is that the previously achieved area of joint effort, as well as the community consensus on objectives it reflected, have both shrunk considerably. Today the community shows a lesser rather than greater degree of unity; more campaigns than ever are outside the central funds—including, paradoxically, a cluster of pro-Israel agencies dear to friends of "unity." And, as noted, the total collections of the central funds have diminished *relatively* as well as absolutely.

Is it proper to anticipate from all this, as some alarmists already have anticipated, an impending collapse of the local welfare-fund structures altogether? Hardly, if one considers for a moment the breadth and effectiveness which remain to these structures, and the personal loyalties they still command even among the leaders of causes who have felt impelled to go outside some of the local community funds for the needed support of their programs. Yet the situation as it exists has led an increasing number of responsible community leaders to seek answers to such questions as these:

Has American Jewish giving actually declined? Or has it just gone out of bounds? In other words, is it merely the centralized welfare-fund dollar, rather than the philanthropic dollar, which has shrunk? If so, why has the welfare-fund structure failed to maintain its previous pre-eminence? Have we run into the over-mechanization and diminishing returns risked by bigness in philanthropy? Are we reverting to the competitive disorder and waste which centralized fund-raising was established to remedy? Or are we, perhaps, on the threshold of a new and more rewarding multiplicity of Jewish interests, a broader diversity mirroring an expanding community? In this multiplicity, has American Jewry's sense of responsibility for Jewry abroad suffered undue attenuation, or has it only been adjusting itself to other obligations in a new balance expressive of present needs and interests pragmatically arrived at rather than reflecting the institutional dominance or ideological primacy of either "local," "domestic," or "overseas" requirements? In a later essay this writer will attempt a closer look at these problems.

Meanwhile, however, it seems reasonable to suggest that an end to present acrimony and confusion can hardly be obtained through increased competitiveness, a "crisis" atmosphere, and coercive controls guaranteeing the lion's share of a dwindling cupboard for one interest or another at the expense of its rivals. Rather, or so it appears to many, it would have to be sought by strengthening the areas of voluntary agreement and cooperation so that funds may be raised at a level higher enough to satisfy all legitimate needs—welfare, civic, and cultural—of the growing and, happily, increasingly prosperous and civic-minded American Jewish community. This is why the way the "campaign" dilemmas of the North African problem are resolved will be watched with special attention by those concerned with both the fate of North African Jewry and the future of the American Jewish welfare pattern.

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THE BASIS FOR OUR DEFENSE OF FORMOSA

The U. S. Can Invoke Both International Law and Morality

G. F. HUDSON

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL once said that the rulers of the Soviet Union do not want war, but they want the fruits of war. By this he meant that, without a real intention to risk a mortal clash of arms, they endeavor to gain by bluster, truculence, and threats objectives such as are not normally to be reached by peaceful negotiation, but only by victory on the field of battle. The most striking example of this during the last decade has been the blockade of Berlin, when the Russians used every means short of actual shooting to force the Western Allies out of their legal rights of occupation in the German capital, but nevertheless refrained from the final step of armed attack on the airlift when they found they could not get their way by intimidation; had there been any flinching on the Western side—and there were frightened souls both in London and Washington who talked about a compromise in order to avert war—Moscow would relentlessly have pressed its advantage and the whole Western position in Germany would rapidly have become untenable. Today an intense and menacing pressure is being applied in another quarter in the hope of adding to the domain of international Communism a piece of territory for which it is virtually certain that the Sino-Soviet bloc is not ready to embark on all-out war. In the present drive to compel the United States to retreat from its commitment in Formosa, as in the drive seven years ago to get the Western Allies out of Berlin, Communism seeks to exploit the Western peoples' horror of war and desire for a quiet life.

But there are significant differences between the current situation with regard to Formosa and that of 1948 in Western Europe—and they cut both ways. On the one hand, the strategic strength of the local defensive position is much greater in the Formosa Strait in 1955 than it was in Berlin or on the Elbe in 1948—and the prospects in an unlimited war probably at least no worse than they were then. On the other hand, the present political situation is undoubtedly more advantageous to the Communist bloc because of the policy rift between the United States and Britain over Formosa in contrast to the unity which they displayed in standing their ground in Germany.

STRATEGICALLY, it must be said that if there is any sector of the Free World's front against aggressive Communism that is eminently defensible, it is the island chain from Japan to the Philippines, including Formosa. In Europe, the Middle East, and the mainland area of Southeast Asia, Western strategy is faced with the problem of defending land frontiers against a superior military manpower that can theoretically be brought to bear against them; similarly in Korea, large ground forces had to be committed to battle in order to turn back an in-

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G. F. HUDSON attempts here to answer some of the most crucial questions now facing the free world. What justifies our defense of Formosa? How seriously do we risk large-scale war by our resistance to Communist power over this issue? How strong is our strategic position in the locality? What kind of settlement of differences can we hope for, and what must be done—and not done—to increase the possibilities of a settlement? Mr. Hudson, director of the newly formed Center for Far Eastern Studies of St. Antony's College in Oxford, England, has contributed numerous articles to our pages analyzing the changing patterns of the great East-West conflict. His "The Communist Terms for Peaceful Co-Existence" appeared last month. Mr. Hudson, born in 1903, has studied in Japan and is the author of several books on the Far East.

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vasion which could not be thwarted by sea and air power alone. But there is no reason why a single American infantry soldier should ever be involved in the defense of Formosa. It is far enough from the mainland of Asia to be defensible by that sea-air power in which it is reasonable to assume that the United States still possesses a superiority as marked as that which the Communist bloc would possess for the first round of a major war on land in Europe or Asia. Even the "offshore islands" close to the coast of China, about which the world has been so suddenly and alarmingly informed, would have a good chance of being held against attack by the Chinese Nationalists if American air cover were provided with sufficient determination. If, indeed, there were no other element in the situation than a Chinese Communist threat to take Formosa by force, there would be very little cause for anxiety. War may always produce unpleasant surprises, but as far as can be estimated on normal strategic assumptions, it is likely that the Chinese either will not dare to make a serious attempt to cross the Formosa Strait or, if they do, will suffer staggering losses without attaining their objective.

But in a situation such as this the question whether an enemy attack is likely to succeed is not the only issue involved. There is also the question whether the position is valuable enough to be worth defending, at even a relatively small cost in casualties and at even the very slightest risk of a spread of hostilities beyond the local conflict. There is the further question whether the cause for which a nation's armed forces are to be deployed is morally and legally justified. And there is the final consideration that, even if the nation directly concerned is convinced in its legislature and its public opinion that its cause is just, it has to take some account of contrary views and policies of other countries, especially when for other important purposes it is in alliance with those countries.

THE most dangerous and alarming feature of the present situation, in contrast to the previous crises over Berlin and Korea, is the separation between the United States and Britain. Whereas the Soviet government has publicly pledged support in the most uncompromising fashion for Peking's demands for withdrawal of American forces from the Formosa Strait, the lack of unity between Washington and London is manifest to the world, and British public opinion is, in general, much more adverse to the American policy than the official attitude.

The absence of sympathy in Britain for the American stand on Formosa is not a new development; it goes back to the time of President Truman's original decision to seal off Formosa after the outbreak of war in Korea in the summer of 1950. A divergency of policies at that point was an inevitable sequel to the British recognition of the Chinese Communist regime earlier in the year. In retrospect the act of recognition appears as a decisive parting of the ways between British and American Far Eastern policies, but it should be emphasized that it was not so regarded at the time. The Truman administration, having cleared itself by the famous White Paper, to its own if not to everyone's satisfaction, from all responsibility for the collapse of the Chinese National government on the mainland, was leaving Formosa to its fate. The British Foreign Office understood that the State Department contemplated recognition of Communist China as soon as the time seemed ripe for it and would not object to Britain making the move first.

SINCE then the hearings before the McCarran Committee have disclosed the minutes of the conference of experts sponsored by the State Department in October 1949 which indicate that the Department indeed had a more than open mind on the subject. It appears likely that the original intention of President Truman and Mr. Acheson was to transfer diplomatic recognition to Peking after the mid-term Congressional elections of November 1950, delaying the act until then in view of the increasing restiveness of American public opinion on the subject of China.

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But what neither the British nor the American government foresaw was the outbreak of war in Korea, which transformed the process of Communist expansion in the Far East from one of domestic subversion into one of direct military assault on a government which had been set up under the auspices of the United Nations. Although the conflict in Korea was held by the Communists and their friends to be, like the civil war in China, a purely domestic matter in which no outside power should interfere, President Truman took the view that a situation of international war had been created and took decisive steps to aid South Korea even before the Security Council (in the absence of the Russian veto) had made South Korea's cause that of the United Nations.

IT WAS as part of his decision to resist the Communist attack in Korea that President Truman moved to "neutralize" Formosa by interposing the Seventh Fleet between it and the Communist-held mainland of China. This step was not taken for the direct strategic requirements of the action in Korea, for even if the Chinese Communists had taken Formosa in 1950, it would not have enabled them directly to add to the threat against the American forces committed to Korea. But the President clearly recognized—as other Western governments should also have recognized—that the aggression which had produced the new crisis in the Far East was not North Korea's alone. Russia had armed North Korea; Communist China had just sent back "to defend their country" two battle-trained Korean divisions which had taken part in the Chinese civil war; both Russia and Communist China gave full moral support to North Korea from the first day of the invasion. Neither Russia nor Communist China could be regarded as genuine neutrals in the Korean war, and Peking's non-belligerent support for the aggressor was converted into full belligerency —under the ridiculous disguise of "People's Volunteers"—within four months of the initial North Korean attack.

Since the United States still recognized the Nationalist government in Taipeh as the legal government of China and had not yet transferred recognition to Peking, it had every right to give military assistance to the Chinese Nationalists against a power which was now also waging war against America. Britain, however, was in a different position; having extended *de jure* recognition to the Chinese Communist regime, and being unwilling for various reasons to admit a state of war with China, the British government declined to associate itself in any way with the American defense of Formosa. Detachment, however, need not mean disapproval, and there might have been a continuing situation in which the United States would have carried the Formosan burden alone, but without pressure from Europe to lay it down. What has in fact happened, on the other hand, has been a development of opinion and sentiment in Britain which has carried British policy more and more into opposition to the United States over China.

HAD the American protection of Formosa remained one of two-way "neutralization," it would have been difficult to represent it to anyone but a Communist or fellow-traveler as a policy of aggression. But during the Korean war American exasperation against Communist China led to "taking the wraps off Formosa," and thus in appearance America assumed responsibility for Nationalist adventures against the mainland. Although Washington in fact obtained assurances from Chiang Kai-shek that no campaign would be launched without consultation, the policy outwardly looked like the underwriting of any action that might be taken by the Nationalists in order to get back to power in China, and British opinion has been very ready to listen to the accusation that America is endangering the peace of the world by supporting the ambitions of a "busted war-lord." The small commando raids carried out by the Nationalists failed to convince anyone of the latters' military capacity, but they were sufficient to create a widespread impression that the Nationalists

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were the aggressors and provokers in the fighting off the South China coast.

It has thus been easy to represent Communist China as the long-suffering victim of attacks against which it is at last retaliating, and of late the situation has been further confused by the assertion that Formosa is an "integral part of China," with the implication that it should therefore be handed over to the Communists from whom it is being illegally withheld. Peking's grievance at not being allowed to "liberate" Formosa is coupled with Peking's other grievance at not being allowed to take over China's seat in the United Nations, and it is suggested that if only America were to be reasonable and remove these two provocations against the People's Republic, there would no longer be any obstacle to a Far Eastern "settlement" which would bring about happy coexistence for all concerned. It is very difficult to indulge in wishful thinking of this kind with regard to Russia in Europe, for Russia already enjoys full rights in the United Nations and there is no Western support for a dissident government within either Soviet or satellite territory; Russian truculence cannot, therefore, be attributed to such grievances as are supposed to determine the actions of Communist China. But the example of Russia's behavior does not convince the habitual wishful-thinkers that Chou En-lai might be just as much of a nuisance to mankind if he were given Formosa and the United Nations seat—for there is always the argument that "the Chinese are not like the Russians."

There is also, as a very important factor in British thinking about China, the attitude of India. For Britain Mr. Nehru represents "Asian opinion," and that is something which must be regarded with the greatest deference. It may at first sight seem odd that Mr. Nehru should be so hostile to a regime which, even making full allowances for the contrasts between India and China, bears such a similarity to that of his own Congress party in its relation to the forces of Communist revolution. But Mr. Nehru's fundamental principle for international affairs is that no Western power may interfere in Asia on any account whatsoever and that, if there is a conflict between an Asian and a Western power, the former must be in the right. The British have defied Mr. Nehru's disapproval in signing the Manila treaty for the defense of Southeast Asia, but they are more inclined to listen to him when he says that for the sake of peace Formosa should be handed over to the Chinese People's Republic.

Faced with a trend of public opinion extremely critical of American policy over Formosa, assailed by a parliamentary opposition lined up behind Mr. Attlee's championship of the Chinese Communist case, and itself haunted by the ever returning hope of better relations with Peking, yet at the same time anxious to avoid serious disagreement with the United States, the British government has taken refuge in a point of law. Sir Anthony Eden solemnly asserts—as is the case—that Formosa, never having been retroceded by Japan to China by a formal peace treaty, does not definitely belong to anybody in international law, but is merely Chinese-occupied territory. Thus he wards off the anti-American crusaders in the House of Commons and keeps the diplomatic door open for a future settlement by which Formosa would be kept separate from China. By this formula the British government can acquiesce in the American policy of defending Formosa without either infringing its recognition of the Chinese Communist regime as the legal government of China or giving the opposition ground for accusations of subservience to America in an aggression against Chinese territory.

The position, nevertheless, has certain disadvantages. It is the kind of legal quibble that people do not usually take seriously outside a law court; certainly it is not the kind of issue on which a nation could stand if there were a risk of war arising from it. Although Formosa has not been formally retroceded to China, there is no other country which could conceivably claim it, nor is there any national separatist movement

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which could justify its constitution as an independent state apart from the retreat thither of the Chinese Nationalist government and its armed forces.

The fiction that the conflict in the Far East is over the legal ownership of Formosa, as if it were a matter of a mere territorial claim by China, merely obscures the real issue. The critics of the Churchill Cabinet have not been slow to point out that, if Formosa does not belong to China, Chiang Kai-shek has no more right to it than Mao Tse-tung, and, of course, the one point on which Chiang and Mao are both agreed is that Formosa *is* a part of China. The doctrine of the juridically indeterminate status of Formosa avoids any statement of the case in terms of containment of Communism, but this only gives an air of unreality to the whole contention, since everyone knows that the fight in which the Americans have intervened was and is a Chinese civil war. Finally, the formula in any case does not cover the offshore islands, which were never legally Japanese territory but are held by Nationalist garrisons more exposed to Communist attack than Formosa itself.

THE Chinese Communists have indeed no "right" to Formosa, but only to an insignificant degree is their claim invalid because of any legal flaw in the territorial title. The real reason why they have no legal right and why their pretensions should be opposed is that there has been a state of war in the Far East since 1950.

The rulers of Communist China by their own deliberate act internationalized the Chinese civil war, by first supporting, and then participating in, a war of aggression in Korea. The Nuremberg Tribunal laid it down that states of war are constituted by acts of war and do not depend on old-fashioned forms of declaration with which states in recent times have found it convenient to dispense. Locked in battle with the army of Communist China in the middle of the Korean peninsula, the forces of the United Nations Command refrained from the use of naval and air power to strike back at the territory of their enemy; this restraint was for reasons that appeared sufficient to the governments concerned, but it was not at all because they had no right to take such action—on the contrary, they were entitled to hit the armed forces, war industries, and communications of Communist China anywhere they thought fit. That out of all they might have done to China as a belligerent the Americans confined themselves merely to protecting an island in anti-Communist hands which the Communists had not yet succeeded in taking simply means that they availed themselves of only a small fraction of their rights in international law for carrying on war against the aggressor. The present situation is essentially the same as that which has existed since 1950, except that it has been somewhat more clearly defined by the formal treaty of alliance between Washington and Taipeh. The Seventh Fleet in the Formosa Strait is simply holding the line where it has been throughout the Korean war—a front then inactive, but no less a front than was the English Channel in 1940.

The fighting in Korea was ended by a truce; the Communists after two years of haggling agreed to a cease-fire when they found that they could neither break through the United Nations lines nor obtain forcible repatriation of their prisoners from the other side. In the Formosa Strait there has so far been no truce, and the Communists, having acquired a fleet of jet aircraft from Russia and having wound up their enterprise in Korea and Indo-China, apparently think that they have prospects of a victorious offensive. If they think so, nobody can stop them from trying; the world can only wait and see how their venture turns out. But if they think they can get Formosa merely by making loud noises to alarm the world with the fear of war and by talking about American interference with their "domestic jurisdiction," then they need to be reminded —as also do many people not on the Communist side—that the present situation has arisen out of an international war which the Communists began, that the state of war

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continues until ended by a formal cease-fire, and that the only possible basis for a settlement after a war which has ended in stalemate is that each side should, as in Korea, keep what it has.

America and the whole free world want a cease-fire, but there is no reason why they should buy it with concessions. Except for purposes of strategic convenience, there is no reason to yield to Communism an inch of ground it has not been able to take—not even Quemoy and Matsu. Communist China can have a cease-fire whenever it wants one, but should certainly not be encouraged to suppose that a payment can be exacted by delaying it. The American government has made it clear that its policy is strictly a defensive one and that it has no intention of trying to put Chiang Kai-shek back on the mainland of China by force. But it has also been made clear that America will go on defending Formosa and related islands just as long as the Chinese Communists go on attacking them.

The date of the cease-fire therefore depends entirely on the Communists, and there is no cause for the West to get flustered or impatient about it. If the Communists mount an offensive, it must be resisted and counter-strokes duly carried out against the harbors, airfields, and gun-sites by which it is sustained, but the enemy will be able to break off the action any time he pleases, and the cease-fire will then be no further off than it was before. If, on the other hand, no serious action comes from all Peking's menaces, then there is no urgency about a cease-fire, and the West should set itself to matching the Chinese patience in such matters. It took two years to bring about a truce in Korea after the real fight was over; perhaps this time it will take three. Nations which stand only on the defensive cannot expect their opponents to be in a hurry to terminate wars, but neither should they be frightened of delays.

If and when a cease-fire is agreed on, the question of a "solution" of the whole problem of China can then be approached. There should not be any political terms involved in the cease-fire; that should be simply an agreement to stop fighting with each side keeping the positions it holds. The next step would be to negotiate as from these positions. This means that the existence of two Chinas would be accepted as the basis for a settlement. If by that time the British and American governments have been able to get down together to the essentials of the problem, and the cessation of hostilities has laid to rest the fears of a new world war which have recently provided so fertile a field for Communist propaganda aimed at dividing the two nations, a settlement should be possible on the terms that (1) the territory held by the Nationalists should be recognized as the separate sovereign state of Taiwan; (2) the Chinese People's Republic should take over China's seat in the United Nations; and (3) Taiwan should then be admitted to the United Nations as a new member.

Such a settlement would certainly be disliked both in Peking and Taipeh; it would indeed be more galling for Chiang than for Mao, for if it meant renunciation of the Communist claim to Formosa, it would also mean the Nationalists' abandonment of their claim to be the legal government of all China. But what is the alternative if it has once been made clear that the Communists cannot take Formosa and that the Nationalists cannot recover the mainland? If a war ends in a stalemate, then the only way of going on in international relations is for all parties to stay where they are—in other words, to co-exist. The Communist powers have now a great opportunity to practice the co-existence which they have so long been preaching. If, however, they refuse to recognize the independence of Taiwan as a condition of transfer of China's seat in the United Nations, then Peking can continue to stay out. There is no need to beg them to come in.

The essential thing in the Formosa crisis is to clarify the issue by stating it in its proper relation to the war which Communist

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China waged in Korea and which automatically internationalized the Chinese civil war, removing it from the purely "domestic jurisdiction" which Chou En-lai now claims as if no "People's Volunteers" had ever crossed the Yalu. As a part of that war the Chinese Nationalist government in Formosa became within certain limits an ally of the United States, and no apology is needed for the American government's refusal to abandon that ally now that the Korean war itself is over. All other arguments in justification of the policy of protecting Formosa—that it is not yet juridically a part of China or that it is essential to the strategic security of the United States—merely obscure the fundamental right of America, as a belligerent in a war in which she was not the aggressor, to protect an organized government which was resisting the same enemy in the same region of operations. It only remains to give this organized government, which was once the government of China, but now holds only certain islands in the China Sea, the international status of a separate sovereign state. It is not the first time in history that war has led to the formation of a new state.

DEATH FUGUE

PAUL CELAN

BLACK milk of the dawn we drink it evenings
we drink it noon and morning we drink it nights
we drink and drink
we dig a grave in the wind you won't lie cramped there
A man lives in the house who plays with the snakes who writes
who writes at dusk to Germany your golden hair Margarete
he writes it and comes out of the house and the stars twinkle he whistles his hounds out
he whistles forth his Jews has a grave dug in the ground
he orders us strike up now for the dance

Black milk of the dawn we drink you nights
we drink you morning and noon we drink you evenings
we drink and drink
A man lives in the house who plays with the snakes who writes
who writes at dusk to Germany your golden hair Margarete
Your ashen hair Sulamith we dig a grave in the wind you won't lie cramped there

He cries dig deeper in the ground you ones you others sing and play
he reaches for the iron in his belt he swings it his eyes are blue
dig your spades deeper you ones you others keep playing for the dance

Black milk of the dawn we drink you nights
we drink you noon and morning we drink you evenings
we drink and drink

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a man lives in the house your golden hair Margarete
your ashen hair Sulamith he plays with the snakes

He cries play death sweeter death is a master from Germany
he cries fiddle lower then you'll rise in the air as smoke
then you'll have a grave in the clouds you won't lie cramped there

Black milk of the dawn we drink you nights
we drink you noon death is a master from Germany
we drink you evenings and mornings we drink and drink
death is a master from Germany his eye is blue
he strikes you with leaden balls his aim is true
a man lives in the house your golden hair Margarete
he sicks his hounds on us he gives us the gift of a grave in the air
he plays with the snakes death is a master from Germany

your golden hair Margarete
your ashen hair Sulamith

THIS poem about life in death and death in life in a concentration camp made a sensation in German literary circles when it first appeared in print. Its Jewish author, PAUL CELAN, was born in Czernovitz, now Rumania, in 1912, when it was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and German is his native tongue. He himself is a survivor of the concentration camps, and has lived in Paris since 1945. "Death Fugue" (*Todesfüge*) is taken from the lone book of poems Mr. Celan has published so far, *Poppies and Memory (Mohn und Gedächtris)*, which was brought out in 1952 by the Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt in Stuttgart. Of the poem itself, Hans Egon Holthusen, another poet, wrote in *Merkur* (April 1954): "With but a few simple paradoxes, Celan has been able to master a theme that exceeds human comprehension and surpasses the power of artistic imagination. . . . Not in order to quiet the consciences of the guilty, but in order to let justice be done to the dead, and to set an image in the stars. A lonely poet—entirely aloof it would seem from the latest forces at work in contemporary German lyric verse—has written one of the most magnificent poems for our time that we possess." The translation of "Death Fugue" is by Clement Greenberg.

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BEHIND THE PIONEER ROLE OF JEWS IN MEDICINE

The Traditional "Jewish Doctor" Explained

L. WALLERSTEIN

A 16TH-CENTURY anecdote relates that Francis I of France, suffering from a lingering illness, asked the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, to send him his Jewish physician. When the doctor arrived, the king directed a few barbs at his religious faith. The doctor hastened to point out that he was no longer a Jew, having been converted to the only true faith. Whereupon the indignant king of France immediately dismissed him and asked for a real Jewish physician.

The currency given this story in non-Jewish sources of medical history is testimony to the persistence of the popular image of "the Jewish doctor." The traditional image has several elements: the Jewish doctor's prevalence, his unusually large numbers in almost every country, and his excellence, particularly as a specialist. Nor in fact is this image far removed from the reality. It has been estimated that in pre-Nazi Germany Jewish doctors constituted about 30 per cent of their profession, while the Jews as a whole were only one per cent of the population. As for the United States, an informed statistical survey turns up the information that of approximately one hundred thousand physicians, about 12 to 15 per cent are Jews, though Jews constitute something less than 4 per cent of the population. And more than 50 per cent of American psychiatrists and psychoanalysts are Jews. The whole point has only recently been dramatized by the conferring of the 1953 Prize for Medicine on two German-born Jews, Dr. Hans Adolf Kregs, now at Sheffield in England, and Dr. Alfred Lippman, now at Harvard Medical School. And this was by no means the first such occasion in Nobel Prize history.

As our anecdote might lead us to suspect, the contemporary situation is but the latest exemplification of that traditional association of Jews and medicine.

Here, for instance, is the text of a letter written by a Roman senator in the 14th century granting Roman citizenship to a Jewish physician:

"In the name of God, Amen. We, Franciscus de Panciaticus, Knight of Pistoia, Doctor of Laws, Honorable Senator of the City of Rome; and We, the Reformers of the City and Administrators of the Roman People in peace and war; to the learned Master Elijah di Sabbato, the Jew, Physician and Doctor of Medicine, Our Greeting and Favor:

"The faithlessness of the Jews whom the Lord of the world has created must be rejected, and the stubbornness of their disbelief must be crushed. Nevertheless, their preservation is useful and necessary to Christians in certain respects, especially those

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THE legendary figure of the Jewish doctor goes back many centuries. The late L. WALLERSTEIN has here outlined the long history of a type that still retains some trappings of myth, and suggested the elements in Jewish life and tradition that may have contributed to the eminence of Jews in the science of healing. Dr. Wallerstein, who died in 1953 in New York City, was a gastro-enterologist on the staff of Sydenham Hospital. Born in Austria-Hungary in 1890, he was an instructor in Talmud at the Hochschule für Jüdische Wissenschaft in Berlin, and earned his M.D. at the University of Berlin. He came to this country in 1922, and in the later years of his life served as president of the Theodor Herzl Society of the Zionist Organization of America. The material for this article was excerpted, with the editorial assistance of Moshe Decter, from a larger work of Dr. Wallerstein's, entitled *The Jewish Physician Through the Ages*, which is as yet unpublished.

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[Jews] who are well trained in medical art and who show themselves helpful in restoring Christians to their former health. Since you, as we know from experience, have in the past and at this time used your well-known skill in medical art to cure not only our citizens but many strangers who, suffering from various diseases, have called upon you for help; therefore, considering how necessary and beneficent your life is as restorer of the health of the Romans and of others, we appoint you a Roman citizen."

Going back to the Roman Empire of the 3rd century, we find Celsus, in the fifth volume of his medical compendium, citing Jewish doctors as originators of some of his prescriptions. Marcellus Empiricus, physician to Emperor Theodosius, praises a remedy for disease of the spleen which he learned from the Patriarch Gamaliel III. The "*Antidotus Esdrae,*" a remedy supposedly taken from Ezra the Scribe (4th century B.C.E.), is recorded by Aetius in the 3rd century C.E., by Alexander of Tralles in the 8th century, and by Nicolai, the author of the standard manual *Antidotarium,* used in the Salerno medical school. There is no evidence that these remedies are genuinely of Jewish origin, but their attribution testifies to the antiquity of the popular image of the Jewish doctor.

THE Jews' own appreciation of the practice of medicine has even more ancient origins. In the Prophetic era, Isaiah cured a serious illness of King Hezekiah. In the Rabbinic period, a Midrashic source, commenting on another matter, attributes to Moses a knowledge of "the art of healing." Finally, at the height of Judaism's medieval glory, Maimonides, who is today certainly far more renowned as a profound philosopher and as the greatest of Rabbinic scholars, was also a busy and distinguished physician, the court attendant to the ruler of Egypt. And Maimonides' career was no isolated instance. Its pattern was repeated among Jews for many centuries throughout the Dispersion, from Constantinople to Castile, from the Mediterranean to the Baltic. Particularly in the five hundred years between the 10th and the 16th centuries, Jewish physicians attained universally recognized eminence in three characteristic pursuits: the translation of medical works from Greek to Arabic, and later from Arabic to Hebrew, the composition of original medical treatises, and the practice of medicine at noble courts or, by special license, in cities otherwise forbidden to Jews.

A key factor in understanding this remarkable phenomenon is that these men were not only distinguished physicians, but Rabbinic scholars and leaders of the Jewish community. This cultural element, possibly indeed the key to the whole story, has not been understood by non-Jewish medical historians. The tendency, rather, has been to attribute the historical Jewish role in medicine to a congenital national aptitude.

Thus, the German historian Rudolf Virchow, speaking at an international medical congress in 1895 about the Jew's great contribution to the development of medicine and about the many Hebrew manuscripts that testify to the role played by Jewish physicians in medical teaching and research from the early Middle Ages to modern times, attributed this to "the hereditary aptitude of the Jew for medical science." The distinguished Spanish medical historian Professor José Gavanes y Capdevilla told his colleagues at the Tenth International Congress of the History of Medicine in 1935 that "no other people is capable of bringing so brilliant a group of distinguished men into the field of medicine." And in our own country Karl Menninger speaks of the genius of the Jew in psychiatry. All this testimony smacks a little of the awestruck wonder of primitives confronted with the magical tricks of the tribal medicine-man.

Actually, there is no need for such near-mystical explanations of a phenomenon which, though admittedly difficult and complex, is explicable in cultural-historical terms. Virtually every particular in the life of the Jews was from the very beginning conditioned by their self-awareness as the Chosen People, the elected carriers of God's Word, and the teachers and exemplars of His Law—

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and the Law was not merely religious and ethical injunctions, but eminently practical wisdom for the *better ordering of the physical regimen, and the hour-by-hour, day-to-day routine of personal life.*

BIBLICAL Judaism was not an other-worldly religion; its emphasis was clearly on life in this world, and it is significant that nowhere in the Old Testament is there to be found a reference to a life beyond. If it was stern, it was not the sternness of cruel fate but of a determined insistence on the necessity to make difficult choices. Rewards and punishments were received here on earth, and the whole teaching of the Torah was directed toward a good and long life on earth as exemplified by the Patriarchs—the length of a life was one of the measures of its success. Even the Garden of Eden was not located in Heaven or suspended somewhere in mid-air; it was in Mesopotamia. The Bible is full of promises of a good life and good health, peace, and plenty, if God's commandments are obeyed; but unrighteousness will be punished by war, exile, drought, and disaster. In his final summation to the Children of Israel as their long sojourn in the desert neared its end, Moses exhorted them with these words: "Behold, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil. Therefore choose life. . . ." The keynote of Scripture is: life is good and worth preserving. A people that believed in only one life, and that always emphasized the *wholeness* of man as a physical, social, and religious being, was certain to take this to heart.

But even with the introduction of the belief in personal immortality during the Hellenistic period and the general acceptance in Rabbinic Judaism of the notion of a life beyond death, with life in this world viewed as an antechamber to life in the world to come, the Biblical emphasis on the good, long life on earth was in no wise diminished, in contrast to Christianity, which systematically denigrated the physical, and the life on earth, as against the spiritual and the afterlife. In Rabbinic Judaism the value of a healthy, vigorous life in this world was if anything enhanced—God's Law was, after all, intended for man here and now, and nowhere else. The Biblical injunction to "take good heed of thy life" was interpreted by the Rabbis to mean: don't take any chances with your health. The whole Law, according to them, was intended to enable man to serve the Lord joyously; and just as they devised a multiplicity of means to express gratitude to God for the goods of life, so also did they prescribe a blessing to be said upon recovery from dangerous illness. Thus, whatever the disparities between Biblical and Talmudic Judaism, there was a continuous development of this fundamental common strain: the value and goodness of life on earth. It was an emphasis that could not but lead directly and logically to a serious concern with health.

A POTENT element of the Judaic "ideology," stressed especially by the Rabbis for whom it served to justify their grandiose legislative expansion of the Bible, was the view that once having presented something to man, God then left him free to use it. "The Heavens are the Lord's," the Psalmist exclaimed, "but the earth He gave to the children of man."

The bearing on medicine of this view is illustrated by two anecdotes from the Midrash and the Mishnah. According to the Bible, Miriam, the sister of Moses, was stricken with a skin disease when she criticized him for taking an Ethiopian wife. Moses, however, pleaded with God for her recovery. The Midrash relates that Moses went before God and said, "You taught me the art of medicine and now I am a competent physician; I would prefer that you heal my sister, but if you refuse I will do it on my own account."

In the Mishnaic story, Rabbi Akiba, Rabbi Ishmael, and a friend of theirs, a farmer, were walking in the streets of Jerusalem. A sick man approached and asked them for medical advice. They diagnosed his illness, prescribed for it, and assured him he would be cured. When the sick man left, the farmer asked the Rabbis, "Who afflicted this man with his disease?" "God," they answered.

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"And how dare you," the farmer retorted, "interfere with the will of God? He smote that man and you undertake to cure him!" "Don't you," the Rabbis replied, "interfere with the divine order by tilling the soil, pruning trees, and fertilizing fields? Why don't you leave things as God created them?" "Yes, I do all that work because without my efforts there would be no food." "And that," the Rabbis responded, "is precisely what we were doing when we prescribed for the sick man. Just imagine that man as the tree in your orchard, the doctor as the tiller of the soil, the medicine we prescribed as the fertilizer you use, and the cure of the man as the fruit you reap."

This fundamental Rabbinic attitude had important effects on the study and practice of medicine. In later centuries, an exclusive reliance on divine providence in case of illness was severely condemned. According to Maimonides, the avoidance of medical help when it is needed is like refusal to reach for food when one is hungry: it is against the will of God. Even the school of ultra-Orthodox, obscurantist rabbis of 13th-century Spain and France, who forbade the study of philosophy and the sciences before the mature age of thirty, expressly excepted the science of medicine from their ban, and agreed that it is a sin to rely on prayer alone in sickness without employing the aid of a physician. Man has been commanded by God to bring relief to the suffering, and he must not shirk this duty.

No sharper contrast can be found than that between Jewish and Christian views in the Middle Ages on the practice of medicine. At bottom the cleavage was theological, but it was mirrored in the advanced state of Jewish practice as against the primitivism of the Christian world in this respect. Medieval Christian theologians were preoccupied with other-worldly matters and negated the importance of life and happiness on earth precisely because they stressed the evil nature of the body; this was a cardinal tenet of Christianity, fundamental to its doctrines of sin and salvation. The Jewish attitude toward the body was a more "common-sensical" one: the body was the divinely created vessel through which the human soul could operate to perform God's will on earth. The Christian dualism of soul and body was opposed by a pragmatic Judaic monism. This contrast is especially reflected in the differing views on sex. To the Christian mind, the sex act was perhaps the very crux of sin; in Judaism, it was the beginning of the performance of the first *Mitzvah*: "Be fruitful and multiply." The many Old Testament passages about sex indicate an unquestioning acceptance of it as a value, and in later centuries the Jewish custom of having sexual intercourse on the Sabbath is a revealing testimonial to the connection between the holiness of religion and the sanctity of bodily delights. The Christian position, closely associated with a general hostility to the then emerging science, was not one conducive to progress in medicine.

Allied with this major strain of Jewish thinking were two other crucial elements in Judaism: the unceasing insistence on the maintenance of monotheistic purity and the later emergence of the doctrine of free will. The first concept involved the utter rejection of all other deities, semi-deities, or supernatural forces, and of any attention to and reliance on them. The second doctrine led traditional Judaism formally to eschew the notion of predestination. In both cases, the result was the repudiation, in a continuous line from the Prophets to the Rabbis, of all forms of magic, astrology, amulets, incantations, exorcism: in effect, any beliefs and activities that would thrust responsibility from man and his partner, the One God. "Thus saith the Lord, learn not the way of the nations and fear not the signs of heaven, for the heathen is dismayed at them. . . . They indulge in such abominations, but you shall be wholehearted with the Lord, thy God." "Israel," the Talmud asserts, "is under no influence of any star." And Maimonides called those who would resort to these spurious means "evil fools." Once again, traditional Judaism establishes a clear directive to man to care for his health and

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ills through his own efforts, aided only by faith in God.

FINALLY, and perhaps more important than all other factors, Judaism was a religious system which took care to legislate all of its basic ideological beliefs, outlooks, and directives into an intricate network of *operational prescriptions*. It left as little as possible to chance; the whole of human life and activity was its domain, and the Torah was meant to encompass all knowledge and wisdom. In an atmosphere, extending uninterruptedly century upon century, where everything was subjected to protracted legislative argument, analysis, and decision, medicine too, a legitimate area for intelligent consideration, took its place alongside civil and criminal law, ethical discussions, labor and commercial relations.

It was also a peculiarity of this system that knowledge was not restricted to one class or group and that all realms of knowledge were equally the domain of all who studied. The Torah was there for all to come and learn. The rabbis were not a special caste; as often as not, they had some trade or profession by which they earned their livelihood. They were merely the men who were especially proficient in their study and knowledge of the Torah; they were the judges, but this only meant that they decided issues of the application of the Torah, the all-encompassing religious Law. They were also expert, since every part of the Torah is of equal weight, in every matter the law dealt with, and this included medicine. It was for this reason that they were the leaders, the spokesmen, the determining force in the Jewish community. And it was no doubt this peculiarity that gave rise to an institution which flourished throughout the post-Rabbinic centuries of Jewish dispersion among the peoples of the Western world: the rabbi-scholar-physician-community leader. Thus, a standard text, Pushman's *History of Medical Education*, points out that "whoever [among the Jews] aspired to be considered a learned man was obliged to be possessed of medical knowledge." The learned men were, naturally, the rabbinic scholars, who were by the same token the leaders of the community.

Maimonides is only the most famous example of this type. Two hundred years earlier, in the 10th century, the Maecenas-like Hasdai ibn Shaprut lived and flourished in the Moslem court of Andalusia. Hasdai was the Foreign Minister and Minister of Finance and Commerce at Cordova. He was also a patron of the arts and the chief sponsor of the rising Jewish learning in Arab Spain. His accomplishments, in addition to statesmanship, scholarship, and communal leadership, naturally included medicine, although it is doubtful if his other activities permitted him time for practice. However, Hasdai did make an important contribution to the study of medicine through his translation of the highly valued *Pharmacopoeia* of the Greek Dioscorides. This book, greatly desired by the Caliph and the medical college at Cordova, was sent to Spain by Constantine VIII, the Byzantine Emperor. But it was a sealed book to the Arab physicians, who knew no Greek. The Caliph requested the Emperor to send him a scholar who understood both Greek and Latin. Constantine sent a monk, Nicholas, as interpreter. Since Hasdai was the only physician in Cordova who knew Latin, he was ordered by his ruler to take a leave from affairs of state to help in the translation. Nicholas translated the book from Greek to Latin, and Hasdai then translated it into Arabic.

A century later, also in Spain, the Hebrew poet and philosopher Judah Halevi practiced medicine in Christian Toledo and then in Moslem Cordova. Another famous name in the history of Jewish scholarship and philosophy, Nachmanides, practiced medicine in 13th-century Christian Aragon. And so the roster reads down through the centuries and in every country of the Western world until the dark period which endured more or less from the end of the Renaissance until the Enlightenment.

TO BE sure, despite the marked and ancient association of Jews and medicine,

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despite the honorable position medicine occupied throughout Jewish history, it was never a distinct sub-division of knowledge per se. Thus, there was virtually no systematic treatment of the subject that could be called "Jewish medicine." Although Rabbinic law was subsumed under a series of general rubrics or "orders" and sub-categories, neither the law nor the tradition lent itself to really rigorous systematization. And since medicine was in any case considered subordinate to other categories, medical discussions appear in Rabbinic literature in a highly informal and rather disorganized manner. So, for example, one might find a physiological discussion entered into by the Rabbis in the course of argument on the larger question of laws governing family relations; similarly, a debate on the laws concerning kosher and non-kosher animals could lead away into a discussion of anatomy and internal diseases.

Nevertheless, a perusal of this literature reveals extensive medical knowledge. Furthermore, it is possible to reconstruct from the many references to medical problems in Biblical and Talmudic literature the trend of thought and practice concerning medicine in classical Judaism.

Three points of emphasis emerge from this analysis: (1) the medical, as well as socio-economic-religious, significance of the weekly day of rest; (2) the vital necessity of prophylaxis: cleanliness of the body, clothing, and dwellings; cleanliness of city and camp during war; isolation of patients with communicable diseases; and finally (3) the importance of organic changes in body tissues as a result of disease. The principles embodied in these three points have only been confirmed by modern medicine.

But the unique contribution of the Jews to medicine was less in discovery than in transmission. It was clear to their contemporaries, as it is clear to us now through historical hindsight, that during one particularly critical era in the history of knowledge, the so-called Dark Ages, transmission was as vital as discovery.

The role of the Jews in the transmission of classical philosophy and science to the Western world has by now received general recognition. What may not be so widely appreciated is that they performed the same function in medicine too, as translators of classical works and as writers of compendiums of current medical knowledge. The nature of medical knowledge and practice at the time made it virtually inevitable for the Jews to perform this particular kind of creative service. For medicine was chiefly a book-science in the medieval period, depending essentially on the recorded experience and accumulated knowledge of generations of practitioners.

For nearly five centuries most Jews lived under the friendly domination of the Arabs and Islam, first in the Near East and later, with the dwindling of the importance of that community, in North Africa and Spain. And the bulk of the translation of the Greek classics into Arabic was accomplished by Jews. By the 13th century, virtually every significant work of classical antiquity had been translated into Hebrew as well, and during the next two centuries the Jews performed the very same function for the Christian world, translating from the Arabic and Hebrew into Latin. Legend has it that the two great medieval medical colleges at Salerno and Montpelier were founded with Jewish collaboration. However that might have been, it is certain that for some time after their establishment, Hebrew and Arabic were languages of instruction, alongside Latin, and Jewish teachers and students were a significant and respected element there.

The mediating role of the Jews has been described in this way by Charles Singer, in his *Legacy of Israel*: "It is in the earlier 'Revival of Learning,' that of the thirteenth century, that this influence may be most clearly discerned. Without Jewish aid this earlier Renaissance would have been long delayed and would have assumed a different form. Without the earlier Renaissance the more familiar classical and humanist revival of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries would have been retarded. The one move-

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ment was historically, intellectually, and spiritually the preparation for the other. . . . Philosophy and science, medicine and law, lay there [in the realm of Islam] beyond the confines of Christendom. The Western mind was awakening from its secular slumber. There was a longing for the intellectual treasures held by the East [Islam]. And yet Europe was haunted by a fear and repugnance for Eastern religion and Eastern thought similar to that which the East now often feels for the West. Such was the stage whereon, during the Middle Ages, the Jewish role was played. These are the conditions under which the Jews acted as intermediaries between Orient and Occident. . . . The Jewish carriers represent perhaps the most continuously civilized element in Europe."

THE true "dark ages" for Jewish medicine, indeed for all Jewish participation in secular learning, paradoxically began when the intellectual clouds lifted over the rest of the Western world. For the excesses of the Reformation and Counter Reformation, when the aroused religious and political passions of the Christian world too often expended themselves in attacks on the scattered and helpless communities of the Jews, drove the Jews farther eastward in Europe, away from the great centers of learning, farther downward into poverty and degradation, and farther inward into an unprecedented intellectual and spiritual isolation. But despite the slaughters, the expulsions, the depradations, the bans, and the forced baptisms to which the Jews were everywhere periodically subjected in medieval Europe, they were still able to play their critical role in the transmission of learning and as physicians in many courts and attending universities.

The leitmotif of the post-Renaissance attitude seemed to be: the Jew has done his work; get rid of him. Before the Renaissance, men learned medicine by sitting at the feet of a master who practiced and taught. Now the universities were becoming the focal point for scientific and medical studies—medicine increasingly became a laboratory science, and the laboratories were associated with the universities—and just at this point the doors of the universities were closed to the Jews. And so the Jews were crowded off and away into an isolation from which they did not emerge until the Emancipation.

The very nature of this emergence points up, in its own way, the crisis of contemporary Jewish life. For it reveals a grave dichotomy that was never before present in the Jewish community and system of values. Jews began to populate the universities of France, Italy, and Germany, despite the potent vestiges of traditional disabilities and obstacles, and laboratories and research departments began to be staffed by Jews. But it was a revolutionary and radically different world from the one they had known during the previous centuries of their medical preeminence. It was no longer a world where science and faith, as Maimonides believed, were the dual elements of divine wisdom available to man. The very act of bursting forth into the modern secular world constituted a rejection of the Jewish world. And while the return to medicine especially was a form of return to a traditional Jewish role and to a Judaistic concept, it was only partial; it was not a return to the whole traditional image of the rabbi-scholar-physician-community leader. And so the secular doctor —and the scientist generally—supplanted the rabbi-scholar of the older Jewish tradition in the scale of modern Jewish prestige-values. In a special and revealing way, this development reflects one of the central paradoxical dilemmas, as far as Judaism is concerned, of modern Jewish living. But as for the role of the Jew in medicine—now that he was no longer "religious" but "secular"—he still remained, and has remained to this day, in the forefront of medical research and practice, contributing far beyond his numbers to the alleviation of pain and disease, and to bettering and extending of man's span on earth.

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EQUAL IN PARIS

An Autobiographical Story

JAMES BALDWIN

ON THE 19th of December, in 1949, when I had been living in Paris for a little over a year, I was arrested as a receiver of stolen goods and spent eight days in prison. My arrest came about through an American tourist whom I had met twice in New York, who had been given my name and address and told to look me up. I was then living on the top floor of a ludicrously grim hotel on the rue du Bac, one of those enormous dark, cold, and hideous establishments in which Paris abounds that seem to breathe forth, in their airless, humid, stone-cold halls, the weak light, scurrying chambermaids, and creaking stairs, an odor of gentility long long dead. The place was run by an ancient Frenchman dressed in an elegant black suit which was green with age, who cannot properly be described as bewildered or even as being in a state of shock, since he had really stopped breathing around 1910. There he sat at his desk in the weirdly lit, fantastically furnished lobby, day in and day out, greeting each one of his extremely impoverished and *louche* lodgers with a stately inclination of the head that he had no doubt been taught in some impossibly remote time was the proper way for a *propriétaire* to greet his guests. If it had not been for his daughter, an extremely hard-headed *tricoteuse*—the inclination of *her* head was chilling and abrupt, like the downbeat of an axe—the hotel would certainly have gone bankrupt long before. It was said that this old man had not gone farther than the door of his hotel for thirty years, which was not at all difficult to believe. He looked as though the daylight would have killed him.

I did not, of course, spend much of my time in this palace. The moment I began living in French hotels I understood the necessity of French cafés. This made it rather difficult to look me up, for as soon as I was out of bed I hopefully took notebook and fountain pen off to the upstairs room of the Flore, where I consumed rather a lot of coffee and, as evening approached, rather a lot of alcohol, but did not get much writing done. But one night, in one of the cafés of St. Germain des Prés, I was discovered by this New Yorker and only because we found ourselves in Paris we immediately established the illusion that we had been fast friends back in the good old U.S.A. This illusion proved itself too thin to support an evening's drinking, but by that time it was too late. I had committed myself to getting him a room in my hotel the next day, for he was living in one of the nest of hotels near the Gare St. Lazare, where, he said, the *propriétaire* was a thief, his wife a repressed nymphomaniac, the chambermaids "pigs," and the rent a crime. Americans are always talking this way about the French and so it did not occur to me that he meant what he said or that he would take into his own hands the means of avenging himself on the French Republic. It did not occur to me, either, that the means which he *did* take could possibly have brought about such dire results, results which were not less dire for being also comic-opera.

THIS is the story of the encounter of a young American with the institutions of French justice. JAMES BALDWIN'S *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, a novel of Negro life published in 1953 by Knopf, established him in the forefront of our younger novelists. Readers of COMMENTARY may also remember his remarkable article "The Harlem Ghetto," published in February 1948, and his story "Previous Condition" (October 1948). Mr. Baldwin was born in New York City in 1924.

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IT CAME as the last of a series of disasters which had perhaps been made inevitable by the fact that I had come to Paris originally with a little over forty dollars in my pockets, nothing in the bank, and no grasp whatever of the French language. It developed, shortly, that I had no grasp of the French character either. I considered the French an ancient, intelligent, and cultured race, which indeed they are. I did not know, however, that ancient glories imply, at least in the middle of the present century, present fatigue and, quite probably, paranoia; that there is a limit to the role of the intelligence in human affairs; and that no people come into possession of a culture without having paid a heavy price for it. This price they cannot, of course, assess, but it is revealed in their personalities and in their institutions. The very word "institutions," from my side of the ocean, where, it seemed to me, we suffered so cruelly from the lack of them, had a pleasant ring, as of safety and order and common sense; one had to come into contact with these institutions in order to understand that they were also outmoded, exasperating, completely impersonal, and very often cruel. Similarly, the personality which had seemed from a distance to be so large and free had to be dealt with before one could see that, if it was large, it was also inflexible and, for the foreigner, full of strange, high, dusty rooms which could not be inhabited. One had, in short, to come into contact with an alien culture in order to understand that a culture was not a community basket-weaving project, nor yet an act of God; was something neither desirable nor undesirable in itself, being inevitable, being nothing more or less than the recorded and visible effects on a body of people of the vicissitudes with which they had been forced to deal. And their great men are revealed as simply another of these vicissitudes, even if, quite against their will, the brief battle of their great men with them has left them richer.

WHEN my American friend left his hotel to move to mine, he took with him, out of pique, a bedsheet belonging to the hotel and put it in his suitcase. When he arrived at my hotel I borrowed the sheet, since my own were filthy and the chambermaid showed no sign of bringing me any clean ones, and put it on my bed. The sheets belonging to *my* hotel I put out in the hall, congratulating myself on having thus forced on the attention of the Grand Hôtel du Bac the unpleasant state of its linen. Thereafter, since, as it turned out, we kept very different hours—I got up at noon, when, as I gathered by meeting him on the stairs one day, he was only just getting in—my new-found friend and I saw very little of each other.

On the evening of the 19th I was sitting thinking melancholy thoughts about Christmas and staring at the walls of my room. I imagine that I had sold something or that someone had sent me a Christmas present, for I remember that I had a little money. In those days in Paris, though I floated, so to speak, on a sea of acquaintances, I knew almost no one. Many people were eliminated from my orbit by virtue of the fact that they had more money than I did, which placed me, in my own eyes, in the humiliating role of a free-loader; and other people were eliminated by virtue of the fact that they enjoyed their poverty, shrilly insisting that this wretched round of hotel rooms, bad food, humiliating concierges, and unpaid bills was the Great Adventure. It couldn't, however, for me, end soon enough, this Great Adventure; there was a real question in my mind as to which would end soonest, the Great Adventure or me. This meant, however, that there were many evenings when I sat in my room, knowing that I couldn't work there, and not knowing what to do, or whom to see. On this particular evening I went down and knocked on the American's door.

There were two Frenchmen standing in the room, who immediately introduced themselves to me as policemen; which did not worry me. I had got used to policemen in Paris bobbing up at the most improbable times and places, asking to see one's *carte d'identité*. These policemen, however, showed very little interest in my papers. They were looking for something else. I

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could not imagine what this would be and, since I knew I certainly didn't have it, I scarcely followed the conversation they were having with my friend. I gathered that they were looking for some kind of gangster and since I wasn't a gangster and knew that gangsterism was not, insofar as he had one, my friend's style, I was sure that the two policemen would presently bow and say *Merci, messieurs,* and leave. For by this time, I remember very clearly, I was dying to have a drink and go to dinner.

I DID not have a drink or go to dinner for many days after this, and when I did my outraged stomach promptly heaved everything up again. For now one of the policemen began to exhibit the most vivid interest in me and asked, very politely, if he might see my room. To which we mounted, making, I remember, the most civilized small talk on the way and even continuing it for some moments after we were in the room in which there was certainly nothing to be seen but the familiar poverty and disorder of that precarious group of people of whatever age, race, country, calling, or intention which Paris recognizes as *les étudiants* and sometimes, more ironically and precisely, as *les nonconformistes.* Then he moved to my bed, and in a terrible flash, not quite an instant before he lifted the bedspread, I understood what he was looking for. We looked at the sheet, on which I read, for the first time, lettered in the most brilliant scarlet I have ever seen, the name of the hotel from which it had been stolen. It was the first time the word *stolen* entered my mind. I had certainly seen the hotel monogram the day I put the sheet on the bed. It had simply meant nothing to me. In New York I had seen hotel monograms on everything from silver to soap and towels. Taking things from New York hotels was practically a custom, though, I suddenly realized, I had never known anyone to take a *sheet.* Sadly, and without a word to me, the inspector took the sheet from the bed, folded it under his arm, and we started back downstairs. I understood that I was under arrest.

And so we passed through the lobby, four of us, two of us very clearly criminal, under the eyes of the old man and his daughter, neither of whom said a word, into the streets where a light rain was falling. And I asked, in French, "But is this very serious?"

For I was thinking, it is, after all, only a sheet, not even new.

"No," said one of them. "It's not serious."

"It's nothing at all," said the other.

I took this to mean that we would receive a reprimand at the police station and be allowed to go to dinner. Later on I concluded that they were not being hypocritical or even trying to comfort us. They meant exactly what they said. It was only that they spoke another language.

In Paris everything is very slow. Also, when dealing with the bureaucracy, the man you are talking to is never the man you have to see. The man you have to see has just gone off to Belgium, or is busy with his family, or has just discovered that he is a cuckold; he will be in next Tuesday at three o'clock, or sometime in the course of the afternoon, or possibly tomorrow, or, possibly, in the next five minutes. But if he is coming in the next five minutes he will be far too busy to be able to see you today. So that I suppose I was not really astonished to learn at the commissariat that nothing could possibly be done about us before The Man arrived in the morning. But no, we could not go off and have dinner and come back in the morning. Of course he knew that we *would* come back—that was not the question. Indeed, there was no question: we would simply have to stay there for the night. We were placed in a cell which rather resembled a chicken coop. It was now about seven in the evening and I relinquished the thought of dinner and began to think of lunch.

I DISCOURAGED the chatter of my New York friend and this left me alone with my thoughts. I was beginning to be frightened and I bent all my energies, therefore, to keeping my panic under control. I began to realize that I was in a country I knew nothing

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about, in the hands of a people I did not understand at all. In a similar situation in New York I would have had some idea of what to do because I would have had some idea of what to expect. I am not speaking now of legality which, like most of the poor, I had never for an instant trusted, but of the temperament of the people with whom I had to deal. I had become very accomplished in New York at guessing and, therefore, to a limited extent manipulating to my advantage the reactions of the white world. But this was not New York. None of my old weapons could serve me here. I did not know what they saw when they looked at me. I knew very well what Americans saw when they looked at me and this allowed me to play endless and sinister variations on the role which they had assigned me; since I knew that it was, for them, of the utmost importance that they never be confronted with what, in their own personalities, made this role so necessary and gratifying to them, I knew that they could never call my hand or, indeed, afford to know what I was doing; so that I moved into every crucial situation with the deadly and rather desperate advantages of bitterly accumulated perception, of pride and contempt. This is an awful sword and shield to carry through the world, and the discovery that, in the game I was playing, I did myself a violence of which the world, at its most ferocious, would scarcely have been capable, was what had driven me out of New York. It was a strange feeling, in this situation, after a year in Paris, to discover that my weapons would never again serve me as they had.

It was quite clear to me that the Frenchmen in whose hands I found myself were no better or worse than their American counterparts. Certainly their uniforms frightened me quite as much, and their impersonality, and the threat, always very keenly felt by the poor, of violence, was as present in that commissariat as it had ever been for me in any police station. And I had seen, for example, what Paris policemen could do to Arab peanut vendors. The only difference here was that I did not understand these people, did not know what techniques their cruelty took, did not know enough about their personalities to see danger coming, to ward it off, did not know on what ground to meet it. That evening in the commissariat I was not a despised black man. They would simply have laughed at me if I had behaved like one. For them, I was an American. And here it was they who had the advantage, for that word, *Américain*, gave them some idea, far from inaccurate, of what to expect from me. In order to corroborate none of their ironical expectations I said nothing and did nothing—which was not the way any Frenchman, white or black, would have reacted. The question thrusting up from the bottom of my mind was not *what* I was, but *who*. And this question, since a *what* can get by with skill but a *who* demands resources, was my first real intimation of what humility must mean.

In the morning it was still raining. Between nine and ten o'clock a black Citroën took us off to the Ile de la Cité, to the great, gray Préfecture. I realize now that the questions I put to the various policemen who escorted us were always answered in such a way as to corroborate what I wished to hear. This was not out of politeness, but simply out of indifference—or, possibly, an ironical pity—since each of the policemen knew very well that nothing would speed or halt the machine in which I had become entangled. They knew I did not know this and there was certainly no point in their telling me. In one way or another I would certainly come out at the other side—for they also knew that being found with a stolen bedsheet in one's possession was not a crime punishable by the guillotine. (They had the advantage over me there, too, for there were certainly moments later on when I was not so sure.) If I did *not* come out at the other side—well, that was just too bad. So, to my question, put while we were in the Citroën—"Will it be over today?"—I received a *"Oui, bien sûr."* He was not lying. As it turned out, the *procès-verbal* was over that day. Trying to be realistic, I dismissed, in

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the Citroën, all thoughts of lunch and pushed my mind ahead to dinner.

At the Préfecture we were first placed in a tiny cell, in which it was almost impossible either to sit or to lie down. After a couple of hours of this we were taken down to an office, where, for the first time, I encountered the owner of the bedsheet and where the *procès-verbal* took place. This was simply an interrogation, quite chillingly clipped and efficient (so that there was, shortly, no doubt in one's own mind that one *should* be treated as a criminal), which was recorded by a secretary. When it was over, this report was given to us to sign. One had, of course, no choice but to sign it, even though my mastery of written French was very far from certain. We were being held, according to the law in France, incommunicado, and all my angry demands to be allowed to speak to my embassy or to see a lawyer met with a stony *"Oui, oui. Plus tard."* The *procès-verbal* over we were taken back to the cell, before which, shortly, passed the owner of the bedsheet. He said he hoped we had slept well, gave a vindictive wink, and disappeared.

By this time there was only one thing clear: that we had no way of controlling the sequence of events and could not possibly guess what this sequence would be. It seemed to me, since what I regarded as the high point—the *procès-verbal*—had been passed and since the hotelkeeper was once again in possession of his sheet, that we might reasonably expect to be released from police custody in a matter of hours. We had been detained now for what would soon be twenty-four hours, during which time I had learned only that the official charge against me was *receleur*. My mental shifting, between lunch and dinner, to say nothing of the physical lack of either of these delights, was beginning to make me dizzy. The steady chatter of my friend from New York, who was determined to keep my spirits up, made me feel murderous; I was praying that some power would release us from this freezing pile of stone before the impulse became the act. And I was beginning to wonder what was happening in that beautiful city, Paris, which lived outside these walls. I wondered how long it would take before anyone casually asked, "But where's Jimmy? He hasn't been around"—and realized, knowing the people I knew, that it would take several days.

QUITE late in the afternoon we were taken from our cells; handcuffed, each to a separate officer; led through a maze of steps and corridors to the top of the building; finger-printed; photographed. As in movies I had seen, I was placed against a wall, facing an old-fashioned camera, behind which stood one of the most completely cruel and indifferent faces I had ever seen, while someone next to me and, therefore, just outside my line of vision, read off in a voice from which all human feeling, even feeling of the most base description, had long since fled, what must be called my public characteristics—which, at that time and in that place, seemed anything but that. He might have been roaring to the hostile world secrets which I could barely, in the privacy of midnight, utter to myself. But he was only reading off my height, my features, my approximate weight, my color—that color which, in the United States, had often, odd as it may sound, been my salvation—the color of my hair, my age, my nationality. A light then flashed, the photographer and I staring at each other as though there was murder in our hearts, and then it was over. Handcuffed again, I was led downstairs to the bottom of the building, into a great enclosed shed in which had been gathered the very scrapings off the Paris streets. Old, old men, so ruined and old that life in them seemed really to prove the miracle of the quickening power of the Holy Ghost—for clearly their life was no longer their affair, it was no longer even their burden, they were simply the clay which had once been touched. And men not so old, with faces the color of lead and the consistency of oatmeal, eyes that made me think of stale *café-au-lait* spiked with arsenic, bodies which could take in food and water—any food and water—and pass it out, but which could not do anything more, except possibly, at midnight, along the riverbank

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where rats scurried, rape. And young men, harder and crueler than the Paris stones, older by far than I, their chronological senior by some five to seven years. And North Africans, old and young, who seemed the only living people in this place because they yet retained the grace to be bewildered. But they were not bewildered by being in this shed: they were simply bewildered because they were no longer in North Africa. There was a great hole in the center of this shed, which was the common toilet. Near it, though it was impossible to get very far from it, stood an old man with white hair, eating a piece of camembert. It was at this point, probably, that thought, for me, stopped, that physiology, if one may say so, took over. I found myself incapable of saying a word, not because I was afraid I would cry but because I was afraid I would vomit. And I did not think any longer of the city of Paris but my mind flew back to that home from which I had fled. I was sure that I would never see it anymore. And it must have seemed to me that my flight from home was the cruelest trick I had ever played on myself, since it had led me here, down to a lower point than any I could ever in my life have imagined—lower, far, than anything I had seen in that Harlem which I had so hated and so loved, the escape from which had soon become the greatest direction of my life. After we had been here an hour or so a functionary came and opened the door and called out our names. And I was sure that *this* was my release. But I was handcuffed again and led out of the Préfecture into the streets—it was dark now, it was still raining—and before the steps of the Préfecture stood the great police wagon, doors facing me, wide open. The handcuffs were taken off, I entered the wagon, which was peculiarly constructed. It was divided by a narrow aisle, and on each side of the aisle was a series of narrow doors. These doors opened on a narrow cubicle, beyond which was a door which opened onto another narrow cubicle: three or four cubicles, each private, with a locking door. I was placed in one of them; I remember there was a small vent just above my head which let in a little light. The door of my cubicle was locked from the outside. I had no idea where this wagon was taking me and, as it began to move, I began to cry. I suppose I cried all the way to prison, the prison called Fresnes, which is twelve kilometers outside of Paris.

For reasons I have no way at all of understanding, prisoners whose last initial is A, B, or C are always sent to Fresnes; everybody else is sent to a prison called, rather cynically it seemed to me, La Santé. I will, obviously, never be allowed to enter La Santé, but I was told by people who certainly seemed to know that it was infinitely more unbearable than Fresnes. This arouses in me, until today, a positive storm of curiosity concerning what I promptly began to think of as The Other Prison. My colleague in crime, occurring lower in the alphabet, had been sent there and I confess that the minute he was gone I missed him. I missed him because he was not French and because he was the only person in the world who knew that the story I told was true.

For, once locked in, divested of shoelaces, belt, watch, money, papers, nailfile, in a freezing cell in which both the window and the toilet were broken, with six other adventurers, the story I told of *l'affaire du drap de lit* elicited only the wildest amusement or the most suspicious disbelief. Among the people who shared my cell the first three days no one, it is true, had been arrested for anything much more serious—or, at least, not serious in my eyes. I remember that there was a boy who had stolen a knitted sweater from a *monoprix*, who would probably, it was agreed, receive a six-month sentence. There was an older man there who had been arrested for some kind of petty larceny. There were two North Africans, vivid, brutish, and beautiful, who alternated between gaiety and fury, not at the fact of their arrest but at the state of the cell. None poured as much emotional energy into the fact of their arrest as I did; they took it, as I would have liked to take it, as simply another unlucky happening in a very dirty

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world. For, though I had grown accustomed to thinking of myself as looking upon the world with a hard, penetrating eye, the truth was that they were far more realistic about the world than I, and more nearly right about it. The gap between us, which only a gesture I made could have bridged, grew steadily, during thirty-six hours, wider. I could not make any gesture simply because they frightened me. I was unable to accept my imprisonment as a fact, even as a temporary fact. I could not, even for a moment, accept my present companions as *my* companions. And they, of course, felt this and put it down, with perfect justice, to the fact that I was an American.

There was nothing to do all day long. It appeared that we would one day come to trial but no one knew when. We were awakened at seven-thirty by a rapping on what I believe is called the Judas, that small opening in the door of the cell which allows the guards to survey the prisoners. At this rapping we rose from the floor—we slept on straw pallets and each of us was covered with one thin blanket—and moved to the door of the cell. We peered through the opening into the center of the prison, which was, as I remember, three tiers high, all gray stone and gunmetal steel, precisely that prison I had seen in movies, except that, in the movies, I had not known that it was cold in prison. I had not known that when one's shoelaces and belt have been removed one is, in the strangest way, demoralized. The necessity of shuffling and the necessity of holding up one's trousers with one hand turn one into a rag doll. And the movies fail, of course, to give one any idea of what prison food is like. Along the corridor, at seven-thirty, came three men, each pushing before him a great garbage can, mounted on wheels. In the garbage can of the first was the bread—this was passed to one through the small opening in the door. In the can of the second was the coffee. In the can of the third was what was always called *la soupe*, a pallid paste of potatoes which had certainly been bubbling on the back of the prison stove long before that first, so momentous revolution. Naturally, it was cold by this time and, starving as I was, I could not eat it. I drank the coffee—which was not coffee—because it was hot, and spent the rest of the day, huddled in my blanket, munching on the bread. It was not the French bread one bought in bakeries. In the evening the same procession returned. At ten-thirty the lights went out. I had a recurring dream, each night, a nightmare which always involved my mother's fried chicken. At the moment I was about to eat it came the rapping at the door. Silence is really all I remember of those first three days, silence and the color gray.

I AM not sure now whether it was on the third or the fourth day that I was taken to trial for the first time. The days had nothing, obviously, to distinguish them from one another. I remember that I was very much aware that Christmas Day was approaching and I wondered if I was really going to spend Christmas Day in prison. And I remember that the first trial came the day before Christmas Eve.

On the morning of the first trial I was awakened by hearing my name called. I was told, hanging in a kind of void between my mother's fried chicken and the cold prison floor, *"Vous préparez. Vous êtes extrait"* —which simply terrified me, since I did not know what interpretation to put on the word *"extrait,"* and since my cellmates had been amusing themselves with me by telling terrible stories about the inefficiency of French prisons, an inefficiency so extreme that it had often happened that someone who was supposed to be taken out and tried found himself on the wrong line and was guillotined instead. The best way of putting my reaction to this is to say that, though I knew they were teasing me, it was simply not possible for me to totally *dis*believe them. As far as I was concerned, once in the hands of the law in France, anything could happen. I shuffled along with the others who were *extrait* to the center of the prison, trying, rather, to linger in the office, which seemed the only warm spot in the whole world, and

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found myself again in that dreadful wagon, and was carried again to the Ile de la Cité, this time to the Palais de Justice. The entire day, except for ten minutes, was spent in one of the cells, first waiting to be tried, then waiting to be taken back to prison.

For I was *not* tried that day. By and by I was handcuffed and led through the halls, upstairs to the courtroom where I found my New York friend. We were placed together, both stage-whisperingly certain that this was the end of our ordeal. Nevertheless, while I waited for our case to be called, my eyes searched the courtroom, looking for a face I knew, hoping, anyway, that there was someone there who knew *me,* who would carry to someone outside the news that I was in trouble. But there was no one I knew there and I had had time to realize that there was probably only one man in Paris who could help me, an American patent attorney for whom I had worked as an office boy. He could have helped me because he had a quite solid position and some prestige and would have testified that, while working for him, I had handled large sums of money regularly, which made it rather unlikely that I would stoop to trafficking in bedsheets. However, he was somewhere in Paris, probably at this very moment enjoying a snack and a glass of wine and as far as the possibility of reaching him was concerned, he might as well have been on Mars. I tried to watch the proceedings and to make my mind a blank. But the proceedings were not reassuring. The boy, for example, who had stolen the sweater *did* receive a six-month sentence. It seemed to me that all the sentences meted out that day were excessive; though, again, it seemed that all the people who were sentenced that day had made, or clearly were going to make, crime their career. This seemed to be the opinion of the judge, who scarcely looked at the prisoners or listened to them; it seemed to be the opinion of the prisoners, who scarcely bothered to speak in their own behalf; it seemed to be the opinion of the lawyers, state lawyers for the most part, who were defending them. The great impulse of the courtroom seemed to be to put these people where they could not be seen—and not because they were offended at their crimes, unless, indeed, they were offended that the crimes were so petty, but because they did not wish to know that their society could be counted on to produce, probably in greater and greater numbers, a whole body of people for whom crime was the only possible career. Any society inevitably produces its criminals, but a society at once rigid and unstable can do nothing whatever to alleviate the poverty of its lowest members, cannot present to the hypothetical young man at the crucial moment that so-well-advertised right path. And the fact, perhaps, that the French are the earth's least sentimental people and must also be numbered among the most proud aggravates the plight of their lowest, youngest, and unluckiest members, for it means that the idea of rehabilitation is scarcely real to them. I confess that this attitude on their part raises in me sentiments of exasperation, admiration, and despair, revealing as it does, in both the best and the worst sense, their renowned and spectacular hard-headedness.

FINALLY our case was called and we rose. We gave our names. At the point that it developed that we were American the proceedings ceased, a hurried consultation took place between the judge and what I took to be several lawyers. Someone called out for an interpreter. The arresting officer had forgotten to mention our nationalities and there was, therefore, no interpreter in the court. Even if our French had been better than it was we would not have been allowed to stand trial without an interpreter. Before I clearly understood what was happening, I was handcuffed again and led out of the courtroom. The trial had been set back for the 27th of December.

I have sometimes wondered if I would *ever* have got out of prison if it had not been for the older man who had been arrested for the mysterious petty larceny. He was acquitted that day and when he returned to the cell—for he could not be released until morning—he found me sitting numbly on the

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floor, having just been prevented, by the sight of a man, all blood, being carried back to *his* cell on a stretcher, from seizing the bars and screaming until they let me out. The sight of the man on the stretcher proved, however, that screaming would not do much for me. The petty-larceny man went around asking if he could do anything in the world outside for those he was leaving behind. When he came to me I, at first, responded, "No, nothing"—for I suppose I had by now retreated into the attitude, the earliest I remember, that of my father, which was simply (since I had lost his God) that nothing could help me. And I suppose I will remember with gratitude until I die the fact that the man now insisted: *"Mais, êtes-vous sûr?"* Then it swept over me that he was going *outside* and he instantly became my first contact since the Lord alone knew how long with the outside world. At the same time, I remember, I did not really believe that he would help me. There was no reason why he should. But I gave him the phone number of my attorney friend and my own name.

So, in the middle of the next day, Christmas Eve, I shuffled downstairs again, to meet my visitor. He looked extremely well fed and sane and clean. He told me I had nothing to worry about any more. Only not even he could do anything to make the mill of justice grind any faster. He would, however, send me a lawyer of his acquaintance who would defend me on the 27th, and he would himself, along with several other people, appear as a character witness. He gave me a package of Lucky Strikes (which the turnkey took from me on the way upstairs) and said that, though it was doubtful that there would be any celebration in the prison, he would see to it that I got a fine Christmas dinner when I got out. And this, somehow, seemed very funny. I remember being astonished at the discovery that I was actually laughing. I was, too, I imagine, also rather disappointed that my hair had not turned white, that my face was clearly not going to bear any marks of tragedy, disappointed at bottom, no doubt, to realize, facing him in that room, that far worse things had happened to most people and that, indeed, to paraphrase my mother, if this was the worst thing that ever happened to me I could consider myself among the luckiest people ever to be born. He injected—my visitor—into my solitary nightmare common sense, the world, and the hint of blacker things to come.

The next day, Christmas, unable to endure my cell, and feeling that, after all, the day demanded a gesture, I asked to be allowed to go to Mass, hoping to hear some music. But I found myself, for a freezing hour and a half, locked in exactly the same kind of cubicle as in the wagon which had first brought me to prison, peering through a slot placed at the level of the eye at an old Frenchman, hatted, overcoated, muffled, and gloved, preaching in this language which I did not understand, to this row of wooden boxes, the story of Jesus Christ's love for men.

The next day, the 26th, I spent learning a peculiar kind of game, played with matchsticks, with my cellmates. For, since I no longer felt that I would stay in this cell forever, I was beginning to be able to make peace with it for a time. On the 27th I went again to trial and, as had been predicted, the case against us was dismissed. The story of the *drap de lit,* finally told, caused great merriment in the courtroom, whereupon my friend decided that the French were "great." I was chilled by their merriment, even though it was meant to warm me. It could only remind me of the laughter I had often heard at home, laughter which I had sometimes deliberately elicited. This laughter is the laughter of those who consider themselves to be at a safe remove from all the wretched, for whom the pain of the living is not real. I had heard it so often in my native land that I had resolved to find a place where I would never hear it any more. In some deep, black, stony, and liberating way, my life, in my own eyes, began during that first year in Paris, when it was borne in on me that this laughter is universal and never can be stilled.

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WALT WHITMAN AS AMERICAN SPOKESMAN

Some Hindsights and Foresights

RICHARD CHASE

MOST people seem to agree, one hundred years after its first publication, that *Leaves of Grass* is a somewhat baffling production. Gay Wilson Allen's *The Solitary Singer,* which will be for our time the definitive factual biography of the poet, reminds us that the first entry in the notebook Whitman kept during the years before *Leaves of Grass* appeared is: "Be simple and clear.—Be not occult." And Whitman often made such remarks as "the perfect poem is simple, healthy, natural—no griffins, angels, centaurs —no hysterics or blue fire—no dyspepsia, no suicidal intentions." But although he succeeded in exorcising griffins and blue fire, along with some of the other paraphernalia of what he called "feudal" poetry, this did not make his own poetry simple. *Leaves of Grass* confronts the reader with many perplexities and mysteries which may perhaps be called the democratic equivalents of griffins and blue fire. The fact is that Whitman found it hard to be simple; it was a struggle he had to keep making. If there is truth in the common view of Whitman which regards him as a naive and uneducated man who tried to be high-toned and sophisticated, it is also true that he was a sophisticated poet who tried to be simple but often failed.

From the very beginning, his readers have had trouble in knowing how to take him. He proclaimed himself as man, poet, and prophet to be the normative type of the American, and we feel that in some ways this is true. But if it is, our actual response to him seems strangely ambiguous and unstable. So ambiguous and unstable has it been that even as we protest that Santayana was wrong about Whitman we have to admit the plausibility of his observation that Whitman "is surely not the spokesman of the tendencies of his country, although he describes some aspects of its past and present condition; nor does he appeal to those whom he describes, but rather to the *dilettanti* he despises. He is regarded as representative chiefly by foreigners, who look for some grotesque expression of the genius of so young and prodigious a people."

In view of these anomalies, it would perhaps be well if we could finally learn to appreciate Whitman by suspending, temporarily at least, the idea (his and ours) that he *is* a "spokesman." The history of our shifting attitudes toward Whitman clearly proves that any account of him that allies him too simply to a "tendency" produces its own anomalies and soon becomes unacceptable.

WHITMAN'S early disciples, like John Burroughs, regarded him with religious awe as a genuinely new order of man; at the same time the "genteel" writers were warning that Whitman was a dangerous revolu-

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SINCE the publication of *Leaves of Grass,* Americans have tended to evaluate Walt Whitman in terms of the myth he himself helped to create, either embracing him as the "natural" poet of exuberant democracy, or rejecting him for his confusing contradictions and his inveterate lack of discipline. RICHARD CHASE sees Whitman as a more sophisticated and complex artist, and man, than we have allowed him to be; and if Whitman is to be considered an American "spokesman," he suggests, the grounds for that claim must be revised. Mr. Chase is the author of books on Herman Melville and Emily Dickinson, and his latest book, *Walt Whitman Reconsidered,* will be published by Sloane in April. In the present essay, Mr. Chase takes his departure from Gay Wilson Allen's recently published biography of Whitman, *The Solitary Singer* (Macmillan, 616 pp., $8.00). Born in New Hampshire in 1914, Mr. Chase is now an assistant professor of English at Columbia.

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tionary and a pornographer. A more useful view of Whitman presented him as the father of American realism; but although in a way he is, he remains on the whole disconcertingly transcendental in his own poetic transcriptions of reality and in *Democratic Vistas* he speaks directly against realism in the arts. He has been regarded as a sexual emancipator with a Rabelaisian gusto for life, but whereas there is some justification for this, we are confronted with a Whitman who was personally virginal and abstemious. And if we hear Rabelaisian laughter in his poems, we are disconcerted to learn the striking fact that Whitman seldom or never laughed out loud.

The most ambitious attempt to make Whitman a part of the "usable past" was that of Van Wyck Brooks and his colleagues, who in the 1920's took Whitman to be the "focal center" of the American experience—the great, normalizing artist-personality in whom were reconciled for the first time American vigor and realism with American spirituality. There is a large and important truth in Brooks's formulation. Yet we now want to ask: is there any *one* focal center in our multiform culture? And if there is, isn't Whitman's occupation of it contested by writers very unlike him, by Melville for example? The political radicalism of the 1930's enlisted Whitman in its cause, and this too made some sense. At the same time one wonders how Whitman—to the end an instinctively rather conservative *petit bourgeois* of the Jacksonian tradition—could ever have been taken as a proletarian writer and revolutionary.

Apparently, the history of Whitman's reputation being what it is, we cannot form any stable view of this poet unless we keep in mind the extent to which he resists the identities he seems to invite and which we impose on him. So the poet himself suggests when he says:

I give you fair warning before you attempt me further,
I am not what you supposed, but far different.

Well, perhaps not *far* different, but different enough to make us see finally that in Whitman paradoxes and anomalies are not just contingent but of the essence.

This assumption is the basis of the new feeling for Whitman that appears to have emerged at the present time. As a test case consider the lines from "Song of the Exposition" in which Whitman welcomes the muse of poetry as "the illustrious emigré" who has left the fabled haunts of Europe and come to America. She is

Bluff'd not a bit by drain-pipe, gasometers, artificial fertilizers,
Smiling and pleas'd with palpable intent to stay,
She's here, install'd among the kitchen ware!

This was formerly thought to be a deplorable piece of philistinism. But apparently American readers can now read these lines without national self-consciousness and find in them a delicious and characteristic wit. At the same time that we have given up holding Henry James's expatriation against him and are amazed at the controversy that once raged about it, we have ceased to worry over the fact that the above lines from Whitman support American materialism. Furthermore a subtle but decisive change has taken place in our attitude toward the poet who wrote these lines. Earlier readers smiled at them. The contemporary reader is sure that more or less consciously Whitman is smiling at them himself, and that in fact Whitman is often at his best as a comic poet of a particularly affecting and serious sort.

Or take another test case:

Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes.)

The tendency used to be to pass this off as mere bravado, or to use it as proof of the self-confessed intellectual incompetence of the poet, or (if one felt favorably toward Whitman) to say that it referred to a Hegelian universe. If one wanted to defend Whitman, in other words, one felt that it

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was necessary to justify the contradictions of his personality and of his work or to show that he wrote good poetry in spite of them. But nowadays readers seem ready to accept his contradictions as integral oppositions and polarities, not of the Hegelian order, but as the elements of a more or less sustained ironic view with which Whitman regarded himself and the world. And they find an intermittent but strong comic intent which appears not only in poems like "Song of Myself" but is carried over into the great elegiac poems—for example "As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life," where the poet momentarily faces the ultimate irrationality of the universe while

the real Me stands yet
untouch'd, untold, altogether unreach'd,
Withdrawn far, mocking me with mock-
congratulatory signs and bows,
With peals of distant ironical laughter at
every word I have written,
Pointing in silence to these songs, and then
to the sand beneath.

To take Whitman as existing in or through his polarities is now thought to be the first step toward a fuller acceptance and enjoyment of his work. (To be sure, shifts of opinion of this sort are never cut and dried, and one should note that writers like Mark Van Doren and Constance Rourke have understood that, as Mr. Van Doren once wrote, "Whitman's best poetry came out of his contradictions.") It is the poet who "knitted the old knot of contrariety" that appeals to Randall Jarrell and Leslie Fiedler, whose essays* on Whitman are perhaps symptomatic of the thinking of the generation of writers—like Saul Bellow, Robert Lowell, Isaac Rosenfeld, Mary McCarthy—who made their mark in the 1940's. The rather savage intellectualism and spiritual intensity of these writers are not matched in Whitman's comparatively relaxed and flowing mind. Yet these writers all have a highly developed comic sense and some of them have discovered that Whitman had too. It used to be a cliché that Whitman had no sense of humor, but it is now thought that the poet was justified in remarking: "I pride myself on being a real humorist underneath everything else."

One may add that if this literary generation has done Whitman some good, he has perhaps done them some good too and could do them more, by way of suggesting a wider understanding of how the self may exist in the world. Saul Bellow remarks, in speaking of the "fierce half-hidden struggle in American society to establish a typical personality," that the conditions of the struggle are more fully conceived in *Democratic Vistas* than in such a modern writer as Hemingway. And the massive figure of Whitman seems to have sauntered across Mr. Bellow's mind between the writing of his early novels and *The Adventures of Augie March.*

To be sure, there are dangers in taking Whitman as an ironist and manipulator of polarities. It may encourage too special a view of the matter, a too sophisticated view. Whitman's absurdities cannot be redeemed by calling them ironies. Bathos should not be called pathos. Mendacity in the man is not amusing (although picturesque prevarication may be, as in the classic letter in which Whitman claimed to have six children in words that might have been uttered by W. C. Fields or one of Mark Twain's magniloquent fakes, like Colonel Sellers). The flustered and heated emotions expressed in some of Whitman's letters to young veterans and other "comrades" have no irony. Nor does the plain, factual Whitman who speaks with such unadorned truth and homely, characteristic language in his moving letters to his mother, nor in some of his passages of war-reporting and nature description in *Specimen Days,* nor in some of the greatest lines of his verse, for example:

And limitless are leaves stiff or drooping in
the fields,
And brown ants in the little wells beneath
them,
And mossy scabs of the worm fence, heap'd
stones, elder, mullein and poke-weed.

*Jarrell's essay appears in his *Poetry and the Age;* Fiedler's is in *Leaves of Grass One Hundred Years After,* edited by Milton Hindus.

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For a part of Whitman's greatness lies exactly in his power of seeing things without the distorting intervention of will or intellect.

It is a good sign that nowadays many American readers can take a less self-conscious and tendentious view of Whitman than they formerly could. They begin to share without embarrassment the delight that Europeans have had in him—that delight which has previously seemed (and indeed sometimes still does seem) excessive or unaccountable, which has seemed to proceed from misunderstanding or to depend on fantasies of innocence and power in the minds of those who suffer from the pathology of history.

The anomalies noted by Santayana do not appear too formidable to Randall Jarrell, whose essay on Whitman, though somewhat giddy, nevertheless carries conviction and who concludes his essay by imagining a future "tourist" who picks up a copy of *Leaves of Grass* "among the ruins of New York" and says, "How very American! If he and his country had not existed, it would have been impossible to imagine them."

ALL this is beyond the purview of Professor Allen's book, the great virtue of which is that its six hundred pages itemize the available facts about Whitman's life. One follows the familiar course of the poet's career with a continuously gratified sense that it is being set forth in unexampled fullness. The skillfully assembled data of Whitman's life evoke whole periods of the national experience, as we follow the poet from his unsettled and impoverished childhood through his early days of newspaper writing, schoolteaching, and carpentering, and so on through his career as poet, publicist, minor Washington bureaucrat, and hospital visitor, and on to his late days as the lionized invalid at Camden. Professor Allen finds no new evidence that calls for a major revision in Whitman biography, and his analytic comments seem accurate as far as they go: the poet, he says, was "gregarious" but "hedonistic and narcissistic"; he was perhaps not overtly sexual but tended toward "homoeroticism"; he was unusually "capable of sharing vicariously the emotions of mothers and older women."

Mr. Allen's critical pages are, from whatever point of view, much less satisfactory. His analysis of the poems is routine and academic. He likes Whitman the "sublime" poet of time and space, Whitman the mystic, the stoic, the Quaker, the cosmic thinker. He pays little attention to Whitman the poet of the self, and is embarrassed by the poet's boastfulness and vaunting Americanism. He explains away or discounts Whitman's poses. He understands Whitman's contradictions, ambiguities, and ironies, not as native to the man, but as inadvertent results of his intellectual naivety.

Professor Allen rightly singles out "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" and "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" as examples of the poet's achieved art. But his real preference seems to be for pieces like "Salut au Monde" and "Passage to India"—those poems, in other words, which are not concerned with the self and the dialectical circumstances of its being but which have "philosophy" and "universality." If his putative objectivity preserves him from most of the forms of mere modishness, it does not preserve him from all. Thus he wants to make Whitman as religious as possible and equates the symbolic lilac of the Lincoln elegy with the golden bough of myth. Yet surely the feeling of resurrection and immortality symbolized by the golden bough is in this beautiful elegy conspicuously feeble compared with Whitman's outright worship of the democracy of death. Does not this almost Egyptian poem appeal, not so much to the vital rhythms of nature, as to a love of asepsis, purification, the cleanly odor of wood and perfume?

But it is perhaps a little ungracious to dwell on these matters, since Mr. Allen's main purpose has been biographical. His itemizing, factual method seems particularly adaptable to Whitman since in so many ways the poet's personality and his poems present an appearance as miscellaneous and flowing as life itself. Still, Mr. Allen leaves out one whole dimension of his subject. He speaks, to be sure, of the "solitary" singer. But when

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he remarks that "this was the real Walt Whitman, undiscriminating, easily stimulated by noise, color, and movement, happy to lose himself in the ceaseless flux of people going and coming," we want to reply: No, that is the mistake of D. H. Lawrence and Santayana and all those who see in Whitman only his "merging" with experience and do not see the recalcitrance with which Whitman could also meet life. Mr. Allen does not understand the Whitman who described himself as "furtive" and "artful." He does not perceive the alien, neurotic, divided, covertly musing Whitman, the envious, fearful, power-seeking, sagacious Whitman who could stand aside from life and adopt a series of attitudes toward it.

For after all, however much Whitman might pose as a burly proletarian with flowing beard, open collar, and pants tucked in boots, he was in fact a *petit bourgeois* intellectual. His life is a series of such paradoxes and symbolic gestures. His charlatanism is a part of the whole man and a part of his work. And, charlatan or not, one of the most consistently remarkable things about him is his ability to make out of his life a series of indestructible ideals, of exemplary acts which belong to any American's cultural heritage. Whitman is only somewhat less recalcitrant to the miscellaneous circumstance of his life as the enfeebled sage of Camden, in his late years, than he had been as the nursing father and hospital visitor of the middle years, or as the proletarian Pan and Christ-like carpenter and common man of the period just before publication of *Leaves of Grass*.

One gathers, then, that at present Whitman appeals to most people who read him with any fresh excitement as the comic poet, the elegist, the singer of the plight and career of the self, the creator both in his personal life and in his poems of various ideal images which we can regard with affection and respect.

This way of looking at Whitman will prove valuable if it remains an attitude and an approach and is not allowed to become a closed account. As I noted above, there is the danger of being too sophisticated, of responding only to Whitman's own sophistication (he is always setting traps like that), and of neglecting his simplicity, his plain democratic populism, his undistorted intuition of the natural sources of being. However many ironies and ambiguities his recalcitrance to life may generate, one of the ways in which he appeals to us is not in the tensions of his mind but in his "loafing," his flowing, pleasurable intimacy with the world around him. It is easy to smile (but wasn't Walt smiling too?) at the surprised and delighted poet who calls himself a "caresser of life," the musing Dionysus to whom life cries "Ahoy! from the rocks of the river." But it is not so easy, so hectic in us are the distortions of will and intellect, to honor Whitman's wonderful receptivity to experience and to recognize the liberating effect it had on a hitherto squeamish American mentality.

One may also note in contemporary thought a too exclusive preoccupation with the self, apart from history and from social and political reality. And this bias is visible in Whitman's own writings. So that in understanding Whitman we have to do what after all he never quite did: conceive of the self in relation to history and democratic ideology, and not merely in its ethical, spiritual, and literary relations.

Whitman thought and wrote at length about this matter. His prophetic program for America and the world is a necessary part of his work and finally we cannot have and do not want his poetry without his program. Yet despite his ideas of historical development, despite his "Hegelianism" and his talk of evolution, despite his general kinship with historical thinkers like Taine and Michelet, he does not know how to conceive of history and the self in relation except by appealing to man's instinct for "adhesiveness" and to a historical process assumed to be benign and maternal.

One can no longer read *Democratic Vistas* without seeing how little historical realism there is in it. Whitman cannot help believing that America is exempt from all such historical catastrophes as overtook "feudal-

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ism." In effect he assumes that America is exempt not only from historical tragedy but from history itself. His sense of things in *Democratic Vistas* is that history really ended at the inception of the Republic, and that from then on change would never be radical but would be merely a matter of gradual unfolding and realization.

This is of course not the usual notion of Whitman's political view, so fixed is the image of the prophet of the future and the "promulger" of those radical changes which would finally bring about a populist republic, indeed a populist world. But observe what Whitman himself says about prophecy in *Specimen Days:* "The word prophecy is much misused; it seems narrow'd to prediction merely. That is not the main sense of the Hebrew word translated 'prophet'; it means one whose mind bubbles up and pours forth as a fountain, from inner divine spontaneities revealing God. Prediction is a very minor part of prophecy." Although he is perhaps not speaking directly of social prophecy, what he says here accords with the sense he gives us in *Democratic Vistas* that the purpose of prophecy is to reveal a perfect dispensation already given, but now debased, distorted, or imperfectly realized. Like many, perhaps most, prophets, Whitman employs radically novel emotions, an apparently disruptive philosophical indeterminism, and a new language in behalf of conservative ideals. And thus in *Democratic Vistas* he commits himself to an implied conservatism strangely at odds with his populism.

One had not thought that the time would come when programmatic conservatism would claim Whitman as one of its predecessors, yet this is already happening. Whitman's conservatism is real enough as a prophetic attitude and as a form of instinctive prudence. (In his later years especially he was always saying things like "I am a conservative of conservatives.") But it is hardly a model for the New Conservatives, being so unhistorical and so unexamined intellectually. It is well to bring out the contradictions of Whitman's profoundly American political ideas, before remarking that after all, his conservative tendencies as they appeal to us in his poems and dithyrambic prose are not nearly so memorable or moving or so well argued as the buoyant democratic idealism which also makes itself felt in *Democratic Vistas* or the radical utopian vision of "Song of Myself" and "Song of the Open Road."

The contradictoriness of Whitman's political ideas is typical of all the "old knots of contrariety" which are found in his personality and his work. In Whitman's mind political radicalism, though dominant, is held in a state of ironic tension with political conservatism. In *Specimen Days* Whitman noticed a similar conflict in Carlyle, although in Carlyle he found that conservatism dominated; and he spoke eloquently of the "two conflicting agonistic elements" that "seem to have contended" in Carlyle's mind. We will always be wrong about Whitman, the man and his works, if we think of him as in any way monolithic or single-mindedly tendentious, or if we think of him as being merely confused. Whitman too was "agonistic." And it is not out of any love of literary intricacy for its own sake, but in recognition of the facts and because one wants to arrive at a steady and untroubled appreciation of his simplicities, that one tries to conceive of Whitman in his contrarieties.

And if this approach leads us to a firmer appreciation of Whitman, it also suggests the sense in which, despite Santayana, he really is "the spokesman for the tendencies of his country." In describing Carlyle as "agonistic" Whitman recognized the fact that to exist in one's contrarieties is not an exclusively American fate. Yet Whitman's writings show his perception that although American democracy offers to the world an appearance of unrelieved uniformity, contrariety is in fact more nearly of the essence of life in America than it has ever been in any great civilization. We now begin to see, perhaps for the first time, the extent to which the life and works of Whitman exemplify what this fate may mean to Americans.

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PARABLE

A Story

CHARLES REZNIKOFF

ONCE there were three brothers. Their names were like those of the blessed patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Abraham, the eldest, was good and very able; Isaac, the second, was just an ordinary man; but Jacob, the youngest, was neither good nor able. They were born in a little town in Poland. The name of it in Polish means "mud puddle." When they were grown up, they left it; the eldest went to Germany, the second to the United States, and the youngest to France.

ABRAHAM did very well in Germany. He was only a clerk in a small store at first, but soon he had a small store of his own, and afterwards a department store. The second brother, Isaac, did well enough in the United States. He did not become rich but he was not poor, either. Jacob, the youngest, never did well and his oldest brother was always helping him with money and good advice.

Now when the Evil One became all-powerful in Germany and even powerful in France, both Abraham and Jacob wrote to their brother in America for help.

The ne'er-do-well Jacob and his family managed to reach a port in France and there they waited for their fare to America, for Jacob was almost penniless. They had a cold room in a dirty inn near the waterfront, the five of them, man, wife, and three little children. The room had only a small window that opened on a blank wall: it was as if they were in a concentration camp already. It rained almost every day. Each morning, Jacob went to the office to which Isaac was to send the money. The clerk would thumb through the mail quickly and say: "Nothing!"

And so it went on, day after day, until the last steamer was to leave that port for America. The steamer was leaving in the morning, and Jacob and his wife and their children went to the office with baggage and bundles, for there was no time to be lost: Jacob and his wife hoping against all likelihood that the money from Isaac had come. Jacob went up to the clerk and again the clerk thumbed through the mail quickly and said, "Nothing!"

Jacob and his wife picked up their baggage and, followed by their children, slowly left the office. As they went towards their lodging, they passed a street-cleaner. He stopped his work and looked at them. "Why are you so sad?" he asked.

Jacob answered: "We are Jews and are trying to escape from the Germans, but the money for our passage to America has not come and the last steamer is leaving this morning."

"Why not go back to the office?" the street-cleaner said. "Perhaps the money has come."

"But we were just there," Jacob answered.

"Go back, anyway," said the street-cleaner.

"We have been at the office and have just left it and there is nothing for us."

"What have you to lose?" said the street-cleaner. "Go back and ask again."

Jacob did and the money was waiting for

CHARLES REZNIKOFF, who is the author of books of history, verse, and fiction, has contributed to this magazine since its inception, and our readers are well acquainted with the special grace of his writing, in its several aspects. Here we print a story which, he tells us, was originally told him by the brother in the story itself whom he calls "Isaac." He wishes us to note that the *midrash* he speaks of is quoted by Judah Goldin in his "The Period of the Talmud"—found in *The Jews: Their History, Culture, and Religion* (Harper, 1949).

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him. Isaac had sent it promptly but it may have been misdirected or, perhaps, the clerk had not read Jacob's name right at first. Whatever the reason, Jacob had the fare and he and his family went joyfully to the steamer and reached it just in time.

Perhaps the street-cleaner was really the prophet Elijah. Who knows? But wait, that is not all.

ABRAHAM, the eldest brother, who was both good and able, was still in Germany. In those days, it was not enough to send the fare to America: one had to send an affidavit, too, showing what those who sent for a Jew possessed, and swearing that he and his family would never become a charge and burden upon the state. But the affidavit that Isaac had sent his elder brother Abraham was returned as insufficient.

Isaac now went to a rich man he knew and asked for an affidavit to add to his own. The rich man received him kindly and said to him: "As you know, it takes time to prepare it. Come to my house this Friday evening for dinner and you will have the affidavit." But that very night the rich man died of a heart attack. So Isaac went to another rich man and this man, too, promised him an affidavit. But before he could furnish it, he was taken to a hospital and was dead. In the meantime, Jacob and his family landed in this country and were welcomed by Isaac.

Then Isaac went to still another rich man and this time secured an affidavit, and he wrote Abraham as follows: "I am sending you with this letter the affidavit of a rich man as well as my own affidavit. The two should be sufficient. But it seems that God is unwilling that you should come to America, for two men who promised to give me an affidavit each died before they could do so, and I am reminded of a story that you may have heard, too.

"There was once a man who lost all his money and could not earn a living. So he went to the rabbi of the town and said: 'Rabbi, I must leave this town and perhaps my luck will change, for I cannot make a living here.' And he asked the rabbi for a letter of recommendation. The man was a good and deserving man and the rabbi did his best to persuade him to stay but could not and finally wrote a letter commending the man to all good Jews in the warmest terms. Then the rabbi reached for the sand with which to dry the letter but picked up the ink instead and poured it over what he had just written. 'It seems,' said the rabbi, 'that God does not wish you to leave. Stay here, my son, and maybe things will be better.'

"But they went from bad to worse for the man, and after a while he came back to the rabbi and again begged for a letter of recommendation. This time the rabbi gave it to him and, if the rabbi had left out any praise of the man in the first letter, he put it into the second. The man left town and spent the night in an inn. That night a rascal, whom the police were looking for, stole his clothing and with it the rabbi's letter. In the morning, the good man put on the thief's clothing, for he had nothing else to wear. But the police were looking for the rascal by the description of his clothing, and they arrested the good man and threw him into prison. In the meantime, the rascal went from town to town, cheating and robbing with the help of the rabbi's letter. After a while, news of this came to the town where the good man had lived and they thought that he had turned cheat and thief because he had lost his money. So the man lost his good name also.

"It may be better for you," concluded Isaac, "not to leave Germany where you have done so well and where a man like you may do well again." For no one then thought that the Germans would put innocent men and women and even children to death. "However, my dear brother, I send you the affidavits you asked for, and may whatever you decide to do be for the best and with the blessing of God."

Isaac put the letter and the affidavits in an envelope and addressed it carefully and gave it to Jacob—who had himself been saved by a miracle and was now living with

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Isaac in America—to mail to their brother, Abraham.

ONE day, Isaac and Jacob were talking together in the park of the city. The sun was shining and sky and earth, bushes, grass and trees, were all in their glory. Reports of what the Germans were doing to the Jews were beginning to come from abroad: how they were putting all the Jews of Germany and other countries to death in gas-chambers. Isaac sighed. "I cannot help thinking of our brother Abraham," he said. "Did my letter persuade him not to leave? But, even if he decided to stay in Germany, why haven't we heard from him all this while? And if the affidavits were insufficient, why were they not returned? I would have sent him others. I am afraid our brother Abraham is dead."

Jacob was silent for a while and then, perhaps because his conscience bothered him, said softly: "I didn't mail your letter. I threw the letter and affidavits into a sewer. After all, it is hard enough for you to help me."

Abraham and all his family died in one of the gas-chambers of the Germans. Now, why did God save the wicked brother and let the good brother perish? A *midrash* tells us: "When the Angel of Destruction has been summoned, he does not trouble to distinguish between the righteous and the wicked."

A WEDDING IN HARVEST TIME

NUCHIM BOMSE

IT WAS such a night as this—
I looked out through the window
and saw:
wagons standing before the terrace,
father and mother in front,
my brother in his white waist-coat,
and all the neighbors and guests.

Afterward I heard
the horses neighing from afar.
That night in my trundle bed
a dream with dark wing
brought them back again:

They are riding through woods, lakes,
mills,
and old jesters are playing
sleepy and weary
the song of the bridal canopy.
They rush on, rush on,
toward the bride in the city,
but a jester has loosened a wheel
of the wagon.

And though they all lie now in the ground
(even Meyer Pudding and his horse),
I thought of them today.
Because it was such a night as this,
I looked out through the window
and saw:
leaves dancing in the wind,
and I alone in the house—a child
in terror.
They have all gone away to the wedding,
all night I have waited for them,
but they have all deceived me.

NUCHIM BOMSE was a figure in the Yiddish literary circles of New York City until his death in 1954. Born in Galicia in 1907, he came to this country in 1948, and here he added another volume of Yiddish poetry to the five he had already published in Poland between the years 1929 and 1941. The translation of this poem is by Jacob Sloan.

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FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

THE HASIDIM COME TO WILLIAMSBURG

New Settlers and Old, Just Across the Bridge

WALTER GOODMAN

TODAY about 75,000 Jews live in Williamsburg. Nobody can be sure exactly how many, what with all the moving going on. They're running a new Brooklyn-Queens Expressway through Williamsburg, and the once fashionable residences on Ross Street are being reduced to rubble-strewn lots, and Lee Avenue's small shops have boarded-up windows and ragged signs with new addresses hanging on their doors. It's a big demolition job; everyone has a friend or a relative who has already moved to another part of Brooklyn or "out to the Island," and many of those still here have moving plans of their own.

But others will stay, like the Hasidim who, in their caftans and fur hats, began converging on Williamsburg in the late 30's. And the old people will stay, like Mrs. Rachel Young, who is sixty-eight now. She came to Williamsburg thirty-two years ago when the houses were in fair condition and the stores were beginning to prosper. She, her husband who had preceded her to America from Polish Russia, and their two teen-age daughters lived in Williamsburg for five years before moving to Borough Park and then up to the Bronx. Her husband died in 1944; a few years later she remarried and returned to Williamsburg. Now she lives in a three-room apartment whose windows look out on Division Avenue. Her children and her present husband's children all live uptown.

She remembers Williamsburg as it was when she first saw it in 1922. "Lots of us were just coming over. They were starting shuls and yeshivas. It was always a Jewish neighborhood—but real Orthodox. Like now, only newer." Her husband worked a machine in a small embroidery factory on Orchard Street, and she settled down to keeping house and raising her girls. She shopped at the kosher butchers and fishmongers and appetizer stores. Things went on much as they did in many parts of the Lower East Side, or in the developing Bronx and Brooklyn neighborhoods. "But more Orthodox," repeats Mrs. Young nodding in reminiscence. "Always more Orthodox."

"WILLIAMSBURG in the middle-nineteenth century was a popular resort," records the WPA *Guide* on New York; "its

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THE Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, across the East River from Manhattan's Lower East Side, has long been a stronghold of Orthodox Judaism. In recent years the religious and cultural life of that community has been diversified by the immigration of Hasidic Jews from Europe, each group with its own *rebbe* and its own special tradition. WALTER GOODMAN describes the impact of the Hasidim on crowded Williamsburg, and speculates about what may in the long run be the impact of Williamsburg —and of America—on them. We will soon print, from the pen of Rabbi Herbert Weiner, a more intimate study of the faith and thought of the Lubavitcher *Rov*, one of the most celebrated of Brooklyn's Hasidic rabbis, whose influence extends far beyond his immediate environment into the lives of thousands of disciples throughout the world. Mr. Goodman, a resident of Silver Spring, Maryland, has written for the *New Republic*, the *New York Times Magazine*, the *Jewish Spectator*, and numerous other periodicals. He was born in New York City in 1927, attended Syracuse University, and earned his M.A. at Reading University in England.

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hotels near the Brooklyn Ferry attracted a wealthy cosmopolitan crowd, including such gourmets and sportsmen as Commodore Vanderbilt, Jim Fisk, and William C. Whitney. With the opening of the Williamsburg Bridge in 1903 and the resultant influx of immigrant families from overcrowded Manhattan, the district's affluence vanished." The first known Jewish inhabitant of Williamsburg had settled there in 1837; for many years, the tenth man for Williamsburg's *minyan* ferried across from New York every Friday in the early afternoon. After 1903, however, Williamsburg became as densely Jewish as Manhattan's Lower East Side, which sprawled out from the foot of the bridge's western arch. Indeed, the East Side merely overflowed into Williamsburg, just across the bridge which rises from Delancey Street, not to find a new way of daily living there, but simply to establish more of the same.

Williamsburg's Jewish section today still extends for about ten blocks in the area of the bridge, bounded on the south by the Navy Yard and on the north by Grand Street. Facing the high Navy Yard gates are garages, steam laundries, a small factory or two, stores that sell innumerable nameless second-hand objects. Walk away from the Navy Yard on any one of the streets that end here—say, Wilson Street—and suddenly the neighborhood changes. It becomes neat, almost clean. There are trees, and turn-of-the-century two- and three-story brick houses with their iron fences.

But if you continue walking north, this changes too, and almost as suddenly. You reach Division Avenue lined with its old five-story apartment houses packed close, reeking of a thousand Friday nights of chicken soup, and its busy food stores, and women carrying loaded bags or minding baby carriages, kids playing at the curb, delivery trucks unloading. You can turn down bustling Marcy Street, where the stores are a little bigger, and follow it into Broadway, lying at the foot of the bridge and shadowed by its El. Here it is like Manhattan's Third Avenue—newsstands, movie houses, shabby bars. Past this, the streets become narrower, more crowded, very much like many of the East Side neighborhoods just across the bridge. Then you reach Grand Street and find yourself among the Italians.

If it had not been for Hitler and the war, Williamsburg might have gone much the way of all the other immigrant sections around New York, becoming year by year just a little more *American* Jewish, adapting to the surrounding pattern. But a new influx of East Europeans began to arrive after Hitler. Some had managed to escape from Europe in time; great numbers of the Hasidim came as DP's, only after they had already experienced the concentration camps. Why Williamsburg? "My sister was here." "An aunt of my oldest brother-in-law was here." "The rabbi came and we came later."

Most of the Hasidim arrived after the war, following their several leaders, including the Sage of Sattmur, Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum, and the late renowned Lubavitcher Rabbi Joseph I. Schneersohn. The latter, with his entourage, was granted safe escort by the Germans at the intervention of the State Department and settled in Brooklyn in 1940, not in Williamsburg itself, but in nearby Crown Heights. The Sage was rescued when a whole train was allowed to pass from Germany to Switzerland during the war—miraculously, his disciples maintain. The followers of the two rabbis came by harder routes—through all of Europe, the Middle East, even China—carrying their belongings in kerchiefs and cardboard boxes. They came to Williamsburg, seeking again the *shtetl* from which they had been uprooted.

The Hasidim did not transform the complexion of the Williamsburg community; it was already Old World. But they intensified it, holding fast against the erosion that had been taking place uptown and in other parts of Brooklyn. "With them around," a *yarmelke'd* grocer asks, "How could you become any less religious?"

Still more shuls and yeshivas sprang up, a few large ones, but most of them very small affairs, serving a handful of disciples of some obscure *tsaddik*. Fur-hatted Hungarians in black caftans and long stockings appeared on the streets, and their wives, in *sheitls* and *fachelkes*, sat before their new homes and rocked their carriages along with everyone else. Soon their children, earlocks dangling, were racing around, yelling at one another in a combination of tongues.

The Hasidim retain customs which few of America's Jews have ever known ex-

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cept by hearsay. Before Yom Kippur they still line up at a Division Avenue butcher shop to *shlog kapporis,* whirling live chickens over the heads of every member of the family as a blessing for the year to come. On Simchas Torah they still dance in the streets from late afternoon till early morning, and spectators, including the policemen on duty, are drawn into the joyous melee. The building of a *succah* remains a studied and exacting matter. While loudspeaker trucks tour the area urging citizens to register in October, the black-clothed Hasidim examine their *ethrogim* under jeweler's glasses and devote a whole day to selecting and comparing their *lulavim.* And lately the trucks have been appearing on the streets on ordinary Friday afternoons blaring out the announcement to citizen and storekeeper that the Sabbath is approaching.

No Jews in Williamsburg are rich, but the Hasidim, it is generally agreed, are the poorest of all. Nowhere can this be seen more clearly than in their bare synagogues and their impoverished schools. The case of the Arugath Habosem Yeshiva and Mesifta is typical. The school was founded about eighty years ago by Rabbi Moshe Ben Amram Grunwald; under the leadership of his son, Rabbi Levi Isaac Grunwald, of Zelem, it was transplanted to the United States about fifteen years ago. In October of 1953, the city authorities shut down the yeshiva premises, which were on the verge of collapse. Since then the five hundred students —most of them refugees and orphans—have been studying in makeshift quarters while the school heads have been trying to raise $250,000 for a new building. The youngest boys were playing noisily in a small backyard just outside his office window while the director spoke in a resigned way of his school's future. "We have to refuse fifty, sixty, one hundred children every year because we have no room. We hold alumni meetings, dances, a banquet for the older people once a year. . . . But for us $250,000 is a lot of money." There is no definite tuition at Arugath Habosem. "They pay what they can. Half don't pay anything."

THIS problem of school support is one the Hasidim share with their non-Hasidic neighbors. With fifteen hundred pupils, Torah Vodaath is the biggest yeshiva and *mesifta* in Williamsburg, founded in 1918. But the principal of the yeshiva's Hebrew department, Rabbi David S. Stern, must still spend much of his time on urgent appeals for money. On the day I visited the school, the teachers had not been paid for a month and Dr. Stern was busy on the telephone seeking aid.

The student at Torah Vodaath is likely to start attending the yeshiva as early as the age of three, beginning with the Hebrew alphabet and advancing to the *Chumash,* the *Gemarah,* and the *Shulchan Aruch.* From nine to one he studies in Hebrew, and from two to six in English—to satisfy New York state regulations. The English instruction given at these yeshivas rarely satisfies the state completely, although the boys invariably manage to pass their Regents examinations. Discipline and instruction tend to be minimal. But as the Assistant Superintendent of Schools for the Williamsburg area explains, "We try to be understanding. We enforce our standards—but flexibly, sympathetically. We move as gently as we can where religious beliefs are concerned. They're touchy things."

When he receives his diploma, the Torah Vodaath student may go on to college—often to the evening session of one of the city colleges. Numerous students, as one might expect, plan to go into the rabbinate; the chances are that they will have to leave New York City and seek Orthodox congregations elsewhere—and the search may not be easy; no ready market welcomes the young Orthodox rabbi from Williamsburg. Others will become lawyers or accountants. "They can become anything they want," Dr. Stern says. "In this country an Orthodox Jew can become anything."

Not so the Hasidim. Their yeshiva *bachurim* will not attend college. A few of those who eventually become rabbis may be directed to congregations outside of New York. But most, whether rabbis or laymen, will not leave the city; very probably they will not even leave Williamsburg. The average Hasid is likely destined for a pressing iron or sewing machine in a midtown cloak and suit loft, or perhaps he will run a neighborhood shop selling guaranteed kosher food to members of his own sect. "So what do you expect us to do for a living? We do what we can do!" His wedding will be

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arranged for him, without dating or handholding or any of the other rituals of American courtship. The bride's head will be shaved. The husband will have his job and his synagogue; the woman her home and children. Children come fast. It is not unusual to see two small ones holding onto a baby carriage wheeled by their young and pregnant mother. "God will provide."

WILLIAMSBURG is sanguine about the future of Orthodoxy in America. On this one point, the Hasidic and non-Hasidic leaders, viewing the world from the perspective of their own unique community, are close—if hardly warm—allies. Nissan Mindel, secretary to the present Lubavitcher Rabbi, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the late Rabbi's son-in-law, tells the story of the English rabbi whose plane from London was delayed, arriving at Idlewild only minutes before the sunset that would begin Rosh Hashanah. A police motorcycle escort was provided to make certain the rabbi would get to Eastern Parkway on time. "Imagine! Policemen on motorcycles and all for one Jew! We survived under the Czars; what shouldn't we be able to accomplish in such a country!"

All the Hasidic sects insist that there has been no falling away among their followers. "True, no more are coming from Europe, but the ones that are here keep up the old ways. We don't expect them to go to extremes as they used to, but the Hasidic spirit they keep. And the children are keeping it too. If four hundred students graduate and ten become rabbis, that's enough. As long as the other three hundred and ninety know the value of those ten."

They can point to Williamsburg itself as the living justification for their optimism. No Conservative or Reform congregations have been able to establish themselves here. Other religions have fled. A Roman Catholic church on Bedford Avenue, its crucifixes and plaster saints removed, has become the Beth Jacob Hebrew School. Most stores are closed Saturday and open Sunday. Thousands of boys attend the yeshivas (nobody has the total at his fingertips) and on the High Holy Days crowds of worshippers fill the tiny synagogues. On Friday nights, groups of Jews in the traditional costume of Eastern Europe dot the streets.

"Here we are not *Shabbos yidn*," the old men declare, fondling their beards. An assistant to the Sage of Sattmur puts the case forthrightly: "For us there is no compromise. You believe or you don't believe. Maybe some Jews need a more comfortable religion; maybe they got very important business to take care of and being a Jew would interfere with them. But for us there is only one way to be a Jew." As he speaks, an undercurrent of chanting comes from the next room where one old man in long white stockings and the black coat that comes down below his knees is making his devotions over a dog-eared Bible; there are sudden bursts of hammering from somewhere in the building, and arguments rage in Yiddish.

Dr. Stern of Torah Vodaath is Williamsburg's most articulate spokesman for the case of the non-Hasidic Orthodox. "So a Jew goes one step away, then two steps. He reforms and reforms until one day he wakes up to the fact that he's a Unitarian. Now, after all, these people *are* Jews! Being a Unitarian isn't the same thing. So the movement starts back. They're all searching for the substance, the Jewishness they have lost somewhere along the way. They didn't find it in a Reform temple and they won't find it in a Conservative temple. They must come back. They *are* Jews."

IN FACT, however, even in this stronghold of Orthodoxy, most of the young people seem to be drifting away from tradition, not into Conservative or Reform Judaism, to be sure, but into that large and ill-defined mass of "just Jews." There is no sudden outbreak, no revolt. Most of the children go to public schools; they attend socials at the Bedford Avenue "Y"; they are drafted into the Army, and when they're discharged some of them join the local Jewish War Veterans post.

Ira Rabinowitz is adjutant of Private Seymour A. Diamond Post No. 478, which meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month in a store on Lee Avenue furnished with some old chairs and tables and an unsavory-looking couch. The store is in one of those blocks that will be coming down to make room for the new Expressway, and Ira is hunting for a new location. "The whole neighborhood's like that," Ira says. "Everything's either being torn down or falling down by itself." An air of dusty

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desertion hangs over the clubhouse, even on Sunday, when six or seven members show up for an afternoon of poker. The post has sixty-one members now, most in their late twenties. Sixteen were raised in Germany and Poland and came to this country as refugees from Hitler. About a third of the membership has moved away from Williamsburg in recent years, and this trend is continuing.

Ira himself was born in New York City, the grandson of a rabbi, and came to Williamsburg in 1944. "I'm still Orthodox. I go to shul on Shabbos; I don't carry change." Ira plays poker with his hat on. But most of the veterans (including one or two sons of Hasidim) enter a synagogue only on the High Holy Days. "You know—they're just Jews." Why did the sons of the Hasidim make the break? Ira sees nothing strange about it. "They're like anybody else."

But the Hasidim, on the whole, are *not* moving away very fast—either from tradition or from Williamsburg. A few wild boys may go, they say, but "couldn't that happen in Europe too?" It is axiomatic that a Hasid cannot worship or celebrate alone; the essentials of Hasidic life revolve around the *tsaddik* and the entire group must participate. They must remain in Williamsburg by the nature of things. Anywhere else the black-frocked, bearded figures would be gaped at; and whom could their wives trust in a strange neighborhood to pass on the edibility of their meat, the cleanliness of their dishes? From Eastern Europe they have brought with them the old loyalties, and the old rivalries and suspicions as well. These are not so heated here as they once were, but even now the sects tend to be insulated from one another. Each lives in the innermost of several concentric circles. Nearest are the other Hasidim, then come the non-Hasidic Orthodox Jews, then the "just Jews," then the rest of the world, alien, distant, never to be really encountered. The three- and four-year-old fence climbers with *peyes* pose, giggling, for an outsider's camera. The students look nervously at the sidewalk if approached; they shuffle their feet, rub their hands, mumble their answers to the outsider's impertinent questions: "No . . . no movies . . . no television. . . ." The mothers and fathers look at the stranger distantly; whether Jewish or not, he is not a significant part of their proudly limited horizon.

The xenophobia of the non-Hasidic yeshiva boys is not quite so pronounced. They mingle more easily with the rest of the Jewish community, but for them too the *goyim* are a kind of strange caste to whom the good Jew does not get very close. And America itself is in some ways not quite *their* country.

In *mesifta* study rooms they dispute delicate points of the Law; they examine and reexamine the Commentaries; they grow incensed at the suggestion that women be drafted into Israel's armed forces. But they rarely talk about America—not even about the Jews in America. Girls, sports, politics—the stuff of dormitory conversation throughout the country—go unacknowledged when the yeshiva *bachurim* gather.

Ira Rabinowitz makes a wry face when he talks about them. "We don't have anything in common with those kids. Especially the Hasidim—lots of the boys don't like the Hasidim. Why? You know—they dress different; they don't talk English. They're so fanatical. Maybe they make some of us feel guilty."

The storekeepers shrug: "Sure they're *meshuga*. So what?"

Ask the non-Jewish residents of Williamsburg about their Orthodox and Hasidic neighbors and they nod philosophically: "That's New York for you."

About five years ago Puerto Ricans began to move into this already segmented community. The candy store newsstands took to featuring *La Prensa* and *Diario de la Nueva York* alongside the *Tog-Morgen Journal*. The Division Avenue store that once housed Nat Pernick Linens became a Spanish-American grocery, and other stores appeared with names like "Casa Lucky Discos" and "La Palmita Colonado." A large multicolored sign hanging clear across one Taylor Street house celebrated the "Primera Iglesia Libre Methodista Hispana." Spanish-language double features were booked at a small Broadway movie house. Spanish shouts mixed with the American, Yiddish, and Hungarian of kids playing on the side streets.

The Puerto Ricans met much the same hostile reception in Williamsburg as they met elsewhere in New York. "They're dirty. They're always having fights." But actually

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there is very little contact among Williamsburg's ethnic groups. "There's no real mingling, and, thank God, there are no scraps," says the principal of a junior high school attended by the children of Jews, Italians, and Puerto Ricans. "The Puerto Rican kids are shy; their family bonds are strong. They stay very much by themselves." A Jewish housewife says: "A family of them moved in here. I see the woman going shopping. It must be a good three years since they moved in. We never yet passed two words."

The Hasidim patronize their own stores, but the other Jewish women will occasionally find themselves buying fruit next to a Puerto Rican housewife. Boys stopping off for a hot dog at one of the kosher delicatessens will often stand at the same counter with Puerto Rican boys on the same errand. But this is about the extent of their contact. The Puerto Ricans are at one end of Williamsburg's social spectrum, the Hasidim at the other, two worlds separated by language, by appearance, and most of all by their own cohesive power. But as the neighborhood changes, as more Puerto Ricans move in and more Jews move out, these two societies may grow closer. For America is impinging equally on both of them. Their children are being born American citizens; they will all be speaking the same language—though, for a while at least, with different accents.

"NO COSSACKS HERE, no broken heads." This is the refrain that runs through statements of the Orthodox leaders, both Hasidic and non-Hasidic. "No yellow stars or Nuremberg laws. No gas chambers."

Dr. Stern is confident that a return to the Truth is inevitable. But he admits that young Orthodox rabbis are having an increasingly difficult time searching out congregations, and he is finding it harder and harder to get support for his school.

As for the Hasidim, "the pious," they recall how their movement burgeoned out of the dry earth of the 18th-century Polish and Ukrainian ghettos. The false Messiah, Sabbatai Zevi, had blinded the masses with illusory dreams of the millennium and then converted to Mohammedanism, plunging them into darker despair than before. The stern Talmudic scholars in Vilna reacted by squeezing Judaism into an academic exercise cold and forbidding to simple Jews.

To these masses the Baal Shem Tov preached a religion of personal piety, of individual contact with the divine. By thousands they flocked to him and his disciples. No dissertations on nice points of the Law at the *tsaddik's* court, but moving parables, down-to-earth advice, dancing, singing.

Now, the Hasidic leaders ask, if their movement could stir men so amid the squalor and oppression of Eastern Europe, what can it not do here where all things work for it—even policemen on motorcycles? But perhaps their question answers itself. Life in Williamsburg is not easy, to be sure. But can the religious surge that developed out of the despair of oppressed aliens in Poland remain the religion of merely poor citizens in Brooklyn? Will not the children of Hasidim respond to the blandishments of America as the children of other Orthodox Jews have done before? The Hasidic leaders, fundamentally uninterested in America, do not ask such questions. An old follower of the Sage of Sattmur declines to speculate: "We remember the past. We live in the present. The future is in God's hands."

MEANWHILE Williamsburg with its boarded-up windows and cluttered backyards is changing. Its old buildings are being torn down, and the "just Jews" who occupied them are moving away; the children of the Orthodox are becoming lawyers and accountants, and many of them too are departing—some to Conservative congregations elsewhere. Silently, the introverted Puerto Ricans continue to fill all emptying apartments. The Williamsburg Bridge and the Broadway El are showing themselves to be not the boundaries of a ghetto but simply ways of coming into and leaving another section of New York City.

On Wilson Street, near Bedford Avenue, stands P. S. 16; right across from it is a yeshiva. At lunchtime children come streaming from both buildings and the little boys in skullcaps are lost among the others on their way home. The new Brooklyn-Queens Expressway that is being built through Williamsburg is one of those concrete multi-lane highways that cut into and circle New York and stretch shining across every state. Direct, clean, precise, it is slashing through Williamsburg's slums like a sword of purification—and also, perhaps, of destruction.

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

A VARIETY OF PAUPERS AND SOME FOOLS

Selections from a Yiddish Classic

MENDELE MOCHER SEFORIM

MENDELE MOCHER SEFORIM ("Mendele the Bookseller") is the pseudonym of Shalom Yaacov Abramovitch (1836-1918), who virtually singlehanded created modern Yiddish letters, transforming the despised "jargon" into a vehicle for a forceful, vivid literature. Reverenced as the "Grandfather" of modern Yiddish and also modern Hebrew literature, he exerted an enormous personal and literary influence on men of such diverse talents as Ahad Ha-am, Bialik, and Sholom Aleichem.

Mendele is perhaps best known as the satirist of the ignorance, the social degradation and poverty, of life in the Jewish Pale in 19th-century Russia. His satirical novellas and stories are openly didactic, aiming to castigate the superstitious follies of the Jews and, by encouraging education, to help eliminate the evils of poverty and pauperization. These themes, and many of his literary devices, were also those of Mendele's predecessors and contemporaries of the East European Haskalah. But to the general task of enlightenment Mendele brought his unique literary genius.

The two selections which I offer in translation below appear in English for the first time. The first is from *Fishke der Krumer* ("Fishke the Lame"), the Hebrew version of which is known as *The Book of Paupers*. The second is from *Dos Vinshfingerel* ("The Wishing Ring"), in Hebrew known as *The Vale of Tears*.

—MOSHE DECTER

Typology of Paupers

THESE are the species of Jewish pauperdom: *foot paupers*—those who drag themselves around on foot; and horse-drawn or *wagon paupers*—those who drag around the countryside in wagons. The foot paupers are divided into two sub-species: *wandering paupers*—a riffraff that is constantly on the move; and the sedentary or *home-town paupers*.

The wagon paupers are also divided into sub-species: *domesticated paupers*—those who were born in a house in some city, generally in Lithuania or Poland; and the *wild paupers*—those who were born inside a wagon in a field and who come from a long line of wagon paupers. All of these paupers are Jewish gypsies. They wander from one end of the Jewish world to another; they are born and reared, they marry, multiply, and die—always on the road. They are "free" people who like birds on the wing accept no authority and are not subject to any social obligations, taxes, charity, prayer, or precept; they have, in fact, no overlord, human or divine.

Among the home-town paupers are the following:

Ordinary paupers: men and women, and boys and girls too, who carry their packs around from house to house on Rosh Chodesh [the celebration of the New Moon], and even during the middle of an ordinary week, and beg pennies and bread. Many of them are in the habit of chasing after everyone they encounter on the street; they grab hold of a person's coat and can't be got rid of until you reach into your pocket and give them something.

Communal-personage paupers: the honored poor of the synagogues, the poor Cabbalists and idlers who collect fees for studying the Mishnah, reciting Psalms, and repeating the Kaddish at a mourner's home or at the cemetery. In this category are shofar-blowers

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and ritual inspectors of books, phylacteries, *mezuzoth,* and other such objects.

Paupers for the Glory of the Torah: for example, ascetics who forsake their wives and children in order to go off and bury themselves in the synagogue of some town to study the Talmud at the community's expense; and yeshiva boys who kill time scratching themselves near the oven and daily look forward to the free meal they may get at someone's table.

Good-deed paupers: all sorts of community semi-officials, who go about with their handkerchiefs spread wide, ostensibly collecting money for some worthy cause.

Hidden paupers: respectable people who have been ruined and impoverished without anyone's knowing about it and miserably eat behind closed shutters the charity they receive in secret.

Part-time paupers: such as the many Talmud Torah teachers who teach part of the time and the rest of the time go from house to house rattling an alms-box; rabbis, judges, cantors, beadles, and the like. Every one of these is partly what he seems to be and partly like all the rest of the beggars with their packs.

Holiday paupers: those who, with the approach of Passover, on the eves of holidays, on Chanukah and Purim—times when Jews are generally lighthearted and gay—gird themselves with joy and go about collecting money, not for themselves naturally, but for other unfortunates.

Loan paupers: who all their lives accept charity in the form of a loan; they constantly assure you that they will return the "loan" with thanks. . . .

There are many other kinds of paupers: "grandsons" and sons of Hasidic rabbis (who live on the alms they receive for the sake of their name); Jerusalemites (who collect money to feed and clothe the poor and starving Jews in Jerusalem); fire bankrupts; people with papers signed by doctors attesting to their stomach ailments and ruptures; paupers clamoring for charity to dower a bride; widows; deserted wives; authors; and cantors who have lost their voices. . . .

Finally, there are the *banker paupers.* A banker pauper carries a special book listing all the households in town. Against the name of each household he has entered a fixed sum, the assessment that enables the "banker" to know exactly how much income he can expect through the year from that particular house. The households, he would say, are all mine; I assess them a certain tax, which comes to me in the form of alms, as it were. . . . Haven't you heard of the pauper from Foolstown who married off his daughter to the son of a pauper from another town, and as dowry gave all the households of Foolstown? . . .

In short, all Israel is—One Pauper.

Foolstown and Pauperville

It's a miracle for Pauperville that there is such a place as Foolstown to rely on as a source of livelihood and a market place for its goods. Pauperville's merchandise is human beings; it regularly sends to Foolstown Jews of every conceivable type and variety: *cheder* teachers and their assistants; Cabbalists and idlers; distinguished Jews and bridegrooms whose board at their in-laws' has run out; Jews with documents proving their poverty; distinguished-looking Jews with various illnesses such as ulcers, piles, and ruptures; shofar-blowers, prayer-chanters, and their like.

Also Jewesses of every sort: pious ones who can read the special women's prayer books for the less literate womenfolk; Jewesses who know how to prescribe for every illness and for birth-pangs—these are ancient ones long past their fertile years; women with eggs and goose-fat to sell for the Passover; feather-pluckers and sock-knitters—and as many other types as might be expected to result from assiduous obedience to the divine command to "be fruitful and multiply." Then there are whole crowds of boys and girls, servant-girls, men-servants, nurses of all sorts, etc.

All this human merchandise is in great demand in Foolstown and is made much of. And Pauperville, which produced this merchandise in the interests of all, is quite vain and proud of it. That's why every citizen of Pauperville considers himself a man of great prestige. And if you should happen to chance upon a Jew who is mad with vanity, you'll know that he's a Pauper. . . .

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ON THE HORIZON

TEL AVIV'S PURIM MARDI GRAS

Oh, Those Golden Slippers!

TOBY SHAFTER

EACH city in Israel has its own special holiday. Traditionally, Passover belongs to Jerusalem. Haifa has a great celebration at Shavuoth—the festival of the first fruits. Lag B'Omer is the day of the Cabbalists in the medieval town of Meron.

Tel Aviv is famous for its Purim Carnival. During the old, peaceful times, all the people from the town and from the country, from villages and from *kibbutzim,* used to converge on Tel Aviv for the *Adloyada,* the Palestinian equivalent for a grand and gay Mardi Gras. There were street parades, elaborate floats, dancing in the open, and a romantic carnival atmosphere. For many years, in the times of trouble, riots, and war, the public *Adloyada* had to be cancelled. But now that Israel has attained statehood, Purim is once again a time for jubilation and revelry.

One year, quite by chance, I followed the pre-Lenten carnival season in Europe eastward. In southern France, there was the famous carnival at Nice, from which our New Orleans Mardi Gras derives. *Fasching* was being celebrated in all the cities, towns, and hamlets in Germany for the first time since the war, with a great deal to eat and drink, masquerade balls every night, music and gaiety. The Swiss Mardi Gras was on the whole more sedate, except for the famous carnival in Basel which began at four o'clock in the morning with all the housewives throwing tubs of cold water out the windows. In Rome, where the children came dressed in beautiful masquerade costumes to an opera matinee at La Scala, the carnival spirit seemed to me the most spontaneous, fresh, and gentle, and I would have liked to linger on to see more of it. But all that month I had had a deep feeling that I must be off to Israel to celebrate the Purim *Adloyada* in Tel Aviv. I had reveled at the masques and dances and parties and enjoyed them. But as a spectator—down deep, it had meant little to me. Mardi Gras was *theirs;* Purim was *ours.* And I wanted to see it properly celebrated at least once in my life —in Israel.

Purim was part of my heritage, a special, warm part. From my Sunday school days I remembered it as an ancient festival dating back to the days when Queen Esther interceded with her King Ahasuerus to save her people, the Jews, from death through the evil machinations of the royal vizier, Haman. As a child, I had been in the synagogue and listened to the reading of the Book of Esther accompanied by the traditional booing, shouting, and raucous noise-making at each mention of the name of Haman. I had heard the old religious injunction "Drink until you do not know

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AN AMERICAN tourist following the Mardi Gras round in Europe finally comes to Tel Aviv for its famed celebration of Purim, and gives us the gay and riotous details. TOBY SHAFTER, born in Maine and now living in New York, where she works as a free-lance writer, studied at Simmons College in Boston and at Columbia University and the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. Her most recent contribution to COMMENTARY, "Maine Pastoral, with Duck," appeared in February 1954.

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your right hand from your left" (but that I had never seen, not in austere America). And I had read of the custom of Purim masques with children in costume going from door to door, as at Halloween, performing or pantomiming the story of Queen Esther and adding such other entertainment as struck their fancy, afterward demanding the customary "trick or treat" reward. I remembered how every virtuous Jewish housewife made special goodies for Purim called *Hamantashen*—fashioned in the presumed shape of Haman's hat, consisting of "pockets" of baked dough filled with either poppy seeds or spiced purée of prunes—and exchanged them as token gifts with neighbors and acquaintances. I heard that latterly the custom of holding masquerade balls had spread among Jews throughout the world and that these balls were imitations of the great *Adloyada* in Tel Aviv. Tel Aviv's *Adloyada* (from the Hebrew words meaning "until he did not know") had come to be, I had been told, a veritable Mardi Gras.

So I flew from Rome to Lydda to arrive in Tel Aviv the day before Purim. I had a sort of costume with me—a gold-trimmed red Chinese dress, promoted from cocktail dress to short evening gown. Now with a gold sequin half-mask, it was a Purim costume. Thus forearmed, I had visions of taking Tel Aviv by storm.

Since there were no hotel rooms to be had I settled myself in a room with a private family. My landlady, a bright-eyed, dark-haired little person with a lively manner, sought to put me at ease. When I told her that I had flown in from Rome especially for the Purim *Adloyada* she looked stricken.

"Haven't you heard that it was cancelled?" she said, trying to break the news to me as gently as possible. "They advertised all over that it was going to be held this year for the first time in a decade and a half, and then suddenly the government cancelled it last week."

I was stunned. My landlady sought to console me. "We've never had an official *Adloyada* in the fifteen years that I've been here," she said. "But anyway there has always been plenty of gaiety and celebrating. You can still have a good time at Purim in Tel Aviv. Just pick a party and go there."

The official reason given for the sudden cancellation was the economic crisis. But many privately thought that security was behind it—carnival time in Tel Aviv might provide the opportunity for countless hostile Arabs to enter Tel Aviv as masqueraders and perhaps take it over. My disappointment was great, but my landlady said that it had been the same every Purim for years, and the only thing actually missing from the carnival would be the public parade which she, herself, had never seen either. By now, the tradition had almost become *not* to have the mummers' procession. She never expected to see it in her lifetime, she informed me gallantly.

When I went out on the street, I saw that what she had said was true. Every kiosk was plastered wtih boldly colored signs advertising a Purim ball, this one given by the Rumanians, another by the Yemenites, a third by the Moroccans; masquerades, concerts, and dances were being held by every sect, nationality, age, profession, and persuasion. One could choose with whom one wanted to celebrate Purim—the Sephardim, the artists, the war veterans, the tourists, the Hungarians, or Albanians.

The entire week was given over to Purim revelry and the entire country was celebrating it. When I returned to my lodging, there was a small and lively pirate prancing around in the hall. It was Yosef, the eleven-year-old son of the landlady, as bright-eyed and dark-haired as his mother.

"Aren't you a day early for Purim?" I asked him.

"We have been doing this every day after school all week," he answered with an air of superiority. "There are seven of us, and we are all dressed as pirates so we can be a gang. We rush home from school and get into our costumes and then we all go out around town until suppertime."

"You came late for supper last night, Yosef," his mother warned him.

Yosef chose to ignore her and turned his attention to me. "Of course, tomorrow night will be the best of all. Then everybody will be out. We are going to have some wine and we are going to get drunk—oh! so drunk."

"Yosef! what are you talking about!" his mother said.

Yosef was down at the other end of the

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hall reeling and swaying in a graphic demonstration of himself as a drunkard, while his mother stood by horrified.

"I have a costume, too," I cried out, as much to divert him as to purvey the information. "Come into my room and see it, Yosef."

Yosef pronounced my costume "not good, not bad." "You should have seen me last year," he continued. "I was a Japanese girl with my mother's kimono and sashes and flowers in my hair. I fooled everybody. Even the kids at school thought I was a new girl."

UPON Yosef's recommendation, I went for a walk the next day late in the afternoon along the sea wall to see the costumes. I strolled along the promenade to the north end and settled on a bench overlooking the Mediterranean. It was late afternoon but still broad daylight. The school children were out in full force. They had been masquerading all week long; the custom was for groups of friends to go out every day after school in their costumes to wander around. Seven pirates passed, cutting a swashbuckling figure as they swaggered by all abreast with their cutlasses drawn and their hats set at rakish angles, black patches over their eyes and red sashes tied about their waists. One of them, a dark-haired, fierce little boy of about eleven, brandished his sword dangerously at me, but did not deign to recognize me in front of his fellow buccaneers.

Two tiny tots dressed as Yemenites toddled by, shepherded by their doting mothers. Every other school girl was Queen Esther. The Queen Esthers were all sizes, colorings, and shapes—small girls, buxom girls, brunettes, blondes, and redheads, varying in age from four to fourteen. They all wore crowns of one sort or another, either of gilded cardboard or of sequins or gold brocade. Some wore their mothers' cast-off evening gowns, others were resplendent in royal robes especially designed for the occasion —all were bedecked with as much jewelry as the family coffers afforded or as they could borrow. Their bracelets jangled as they walked and some wore ten or eleven strands of beads around their necks. Many little girls—and boys too—paraded by dressed as Japanese geisha girls in colorful brocade kimonos, peeping flirtatiously over and around their fans. One little boy with sparkling black eyes and coal black hair was dressed in flowing royal robes and crying lustily, with his mother comforting him in vain.

I drank in the gay, colorful scene, and watched the young soldiers on leave in Tel Aviv for the week end do the same. Though many of them could not have been more than seventeen years old themselves and looked absurdly young and awkward in their ill-fitting khaki uniforms, they took a paternal interest in the children in the Purim parade. A dark and lovely Queen Esther of about fourteen with a full court of younger children made her queenly way past the sea wall. Her lacy train (concocted from a curtain, no doubt) trailed majestically behind her. She carried her crowned head proudly. Her bejeweled fingers were curled in a graceful, imperious gesture. Suddenly she began having trouble with her long dress and high-heeled pumps—obviously borrowed and several sizes too large. Swaying precariously, she just kept her balance as she bravely went forward. The young soldiers gallantly sprang to her side with cries of *"Hi shotefet! Hi shotefet!* She is stumbling. She is stumbling." But Queen Esther miraculously righted herself and continued her uncertain, weaving way in the parade, and there was a collective sigh of relief as she wavered down the street.

SUPPERTIME came and the crowds of both spectators and paraders thinned. I had acquired a ticket to the Purim party at the tourist center, but I really had my mind set on the Four Arts Masquerade Ball at a seaside hotel.

I dressed quickly. I had a shantung dress of Chinese red with metallic gold embroidery on the high mandarin neck and short winged sleeves. With it I wore a belt of gold, golden shoes, and a half-mask of gold sequins. By darkening my eyebrows and extending the corners of my eyes upward with black mascara, I was a reasonable facsimile of a Chinese girl of quality. It was seven o'clock and the ball began at nine. Reading through the newspaper to kill time, I came across a schedule of the public Purim celebrations being held all over the country. In Tel Aviv, the *Megillah,* the Book of Esther, was being read at seven o'clock in the Great Synagogue on Allenby Street. I

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couldn't linger until nine—I had to get out on the streets to see and be seen.

"Where is the Great Synagogue? What bus do I take to get there?" I asked breathlessly of the handsome young Sephardi policeman on the corner, trim in his navy blue uniform and white-topped yachting cap.

Bus Number 9A, he told me, would carry me practically to the door of the synagogue, adding parenthetically as he waved me on, "When you get there, say a prayer for me, too, little one."

I turned the corner and made for the bus stop. Shagging down the street followed by a laughing crowd was a young Hasid clad in an ankle-length sheepskin coat and a false red beard that reached to his knees, his fur-trimmed shallow round hat askew. He had obeyed the godly injunction and was drunk as a lord. He danced to the right, he danced to the left, clapping out the rhythm with his hands—his eyes brimming with ecstasy. He was having a wonderful time and so were all his raggle-taggle followers. I crossed the street to avoid colliding with the oncoming celebrants.

As my spike heels clicked briskly on the pavement—my shoes glittering in the half light—a little boy of about four came skipping down the street after me calling out in glee, "*Naalei zahav! Naalei zahav!* Golden shoes! Golden shoes!"

I swung onto an oncoming bus, asking the driver if he could take me to the Great Synagogue. "I wish I could, but I can't," he said. "I yield the honor to the bus behind me. But tell me, cutie, where did you get those *zisse goldene shichelach,* those sweet little golden shoes?"

"Darling little golden shoes," echoed several young men on the bus in chorus. I thought the women cast sour looks in my direction.

I HOPPED down and skipped to the bus behind. Hanging on the leather strap I swayed to the motion of the bus lurching drunkenly through the thick traffic. Several passengers undertook to show me the stop, for the area surrounding the Great Synagogue had been roped off, and the buses had to detour for this one night. The roadways around the synagogue were milling with holiday crowds. The synagogue, a monumentally impressive white mosque, had its smooth dome brilliantly lighted and a powerful loud speaker blared the high-spirited services out of doors for those who could not wedge into the interior. I was late, and the observance had already begun, and I joined the crowds under the stars. Many of the people had provided themselves with *groggers,* wooden noisemakers that whirled around and around on a notched stick, tin horns, confetti, and multi-colored streamers. Whenever the name of Haman, the wicked vizier, was intoned from inside the synagogue, the "worshippers" lifted their *groggers* high above their heads and twirled vigorously to produce the most raucous of noises; they blew tin horns; they showered confetti into the air. When the formal services were concluded, the people who had been inside the synagogue emerged and joined the throng outside. The loud speakers now began broadcasting Hebrew folk songs and soon small groups spontaneously started dancing the *hora* in the roadway. Others ran to join them and enlarged the circle until there were dancers stamping and bobbing for blocks around the Great Synagogue, in its glowing beauty surveying the scene benignly from its setting of trees and hedges. Gradually the crowds thinned, the dancing stopped, and the confetti of many colors lay thick upon the pavements like a bizarre snowfall.

I followed the crowds out. A young man trailed me. Wherever I walked, wherever I rode, I could not elude him. He sidled up to me on the bus, a sandy-haired young man who looked harmless enough. "Hello," he said ingratiatingly.

"Hello," I answered a bit coolly.

"I saw you at the Great Synagogue," he offered by way of introduction. "Would you like to have dinner with me?"

"I'm going to a masquerade ball," I told him.

"Just have a bite with me," he said. "I'll deliver you safely at the door of the ball."

On an impulse I consented, and we walked into a restaurant. It turned out not at all the romantic episode it should have been. The restaurant was a vegetarian restaurant, and the young man was really a very dull young man. And his enthusiasm for me seemed to be evaporating the further away we found ourselves from the convivial spirit around the Great Synagogue.

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It was with considerable relief that I bade him adieu at the gates of the hotel where the Four Arts Masquerade Ball was to be.

OF course, I had no invitation and no ticket, but I was determined to go. Though it was almost nine, the hotel was strangely quiet. Evidently I was early. I watched for my opportunity.

In a moment, two black limousines drew up and began disgorging young men in gleaming tuxedos carrying musical instruments. One of the young men of the band —very blond and very attractive in a bright-as-a-penny sort of way—was lifted bodily from the car by the two drivers, for his right leg was in a cast. I approached them and asked innocently in Hebrew if the masquerade ball was being held in this hotel. The blond young man observed instantly in excellent English, "You're an American, aren't you?" and proceeded to outline the delights promised by the ball when it commenced an hour hence. I showed him my invitation—the wrong one. He laughed and said, "You've come to the wrong place. This is the Four Arts Ball. The actors from Habima, opera stars, artists, writers, and dancers will be here. It's going to be vastly more interesting than your tourist ball."

As if I didn't know. I opened my eyes wide and told the young man how I yearned to go. How would it be if I came in with the orchestra as their "singer"? All the well-known dance bands in America had at least one female vocalist, I said knowingly. He was agreeable, and I planted myself in the middle of the forest of black-tuxedoed young men carrying violins and saxophones, cornets and drums, while the blond young man hobbled in behind us on the driver's supporting arm.

Inside, the caterers were putting the finishing touches to the long buffet tables heavy with fancy cakes and colorful hors d'oeuvres, punch bowls, wines, and liqueurs. The main ballroom itself had been decorated with violently fantastic murals depicting a throned king who reached twenty feet from the floor to the ceiling, an extravagantly conceived court scene in purple and crimson and yellow, and intimate glimpses of the ladies of the harem. Small tables had been placed on three sides of the dance floor and on the glassed-in terrace overlooking the sea, giving the atmosphere of a small night club. The dais for the band was near the door that opened into the bar. The musicians busied themselves with arranging their instruments, testing the chairs, and adjusting the music stands. My young blond friend was the pianist, and he called me over to listen as he ran his fingers over the keyboard and picked out a few experimental tunes.

A large, fat young man dressed in a bright blue and red Napoleonic uniform, who was serving as major domo, came over and jokingly demanded tickets from the band. It was no joke to me. I made myself as small as possible while they shooed him away. Then he took up his station by the door and began to take tickets in earnest from the masqueraders who were beginning to come in. The men were resplendent in the costumes of generals, Arab sheikhs in flowing gowns, courtiers in knee breeches of satin and powdered wigs, playing cock-of-the-walk to the feeble display of the drab wrens who wore makeshift costumes, awkwardly unbecoming evening gowns, or dull, unfashionable street dresses. (Possibly it is because there are so many more men than women in Israel that the men vie with one another to attract the girls—apparently all the girls have to do in Israel is just sit tight.) One man had a costume made entirely of newspapers; another was dressed as a baby, complete with diaper changes. A third was behung with paper-covered candy kisses from neck to ankle. A most arresting "girl" there was a berouged, bewigged young man with a lithe, graceful figure that put to shame many of the genuine females, who ran rather to fat and hippiness. The various groups chose tables as they entered. The band struck up some dance music, and a few couples ventured onto the floor.

Until the hall was filled, I was too absorbed in watching the costumes to feel self-conscious. But when everybody was seated in groups at the tables or dancing or drinking at the bar, I realized that I was escortless and alone. I began to see myself sitting in a corner near the band all evening—a wallflower.

Sensing my plight, the blond piano player leaned toward me and whispered, "If I didn't have this broken leg and this cast,

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I'd leave the band for a few numbers and dance with you."

"If I saw an unattached man, I'd be dancing now," I said. "Everybody seems to be with somebody."

"There are a few unattached men."

"I don't see any."

"Look more closely. I've noticed a few."

"Well," I sighed reluctantly, "if there are any anywhere, they are not in this room. Maybe there are some in the bar."

I WENT into the bar and ordered a Scotch and soda which I gulped down in one swallow like medicine. I came out of the bar with a pilot of the Israeli Air Force. He was very handsome and muscular in his officers' uniform, and his even, regular features were set off by a tiny military mustache.

I cast a triumphant look at the piano player as I swept by the band on my escort's arm. He slapped his broken leg with one hand and covered his face with the other when he saw what I had caught.

My partner was a strong, vigorous, and not particularly graceful dancer. I wanted to beg off some of the more taxing Latin American dances but he insisted on dancing every dance. "You can rumba if you just let yourself go," he assured me, "and you can samba and mambo, too." He taught me how to samba forthwith and soon I was wiggling and dipping with the best of them to the tune of *"Ay Yi Yi Maria, Maria me-Naharia."*

During a slow waltz, my partner's energies were diverted somewhat from the vigor of the dancing and he noticed a friend on the dance floor, a fellow officer of the Israeli Air Force, extremely handsome and proper with the same clipped military mustache.

"Cheerio!" they greeted one another Britishly, though both were of Central European birth. My partner's colleague was dancing with the most beautiful girl at the ball. She was a lovely redhead with dead white skin of magnolia texture and a lissome figure. But she seemed to be in much the same predicament as I. She looked exhausted and she hung somewhat limply about her vigorous escort's neck. We exchanged looks of commiseration.

The band struck up a lively tune and once more we were off and away. I could scarcely drag one foot after another. Eight or ten dancers formed a circle and began kicking up their heels in time to the music. Needless to say, my partner was not going to miss this one. We were among the first to join the circle, or to be more accurate, he decided and dragged me in willy-nilly. Soon thirty or forty people were high-kicking rhythmically like slightly muscle-bound chorus girls. We kicked like the rest—around and around the circle. I began to feel light and gay and danced in sheer exuberance. Then the circle broke; we dropped out and dragged our way back to our small corner table, exhausted. The hovering waiter took our order for wine and cakes, and my partner began to regale me with the glories of the country. He described his beautiful apartment on Mt. Carmel in Haifa, and asked me to visit him when I got there. Then he had an inspiration.

"I'll get two weeks' leave," he said, "and we can tour the country. We'll go to the Emek and the Galil or to the Negev—anywhere you choose."

I accidentally spilled some of the wine, which tended momentarily to divert his attention from this brilliant idea.

"You had better get some cold water to take the stain out of your pants," I told him with concern. He left to do so.

Instantly, a tall curly-haired male in a business suit appeared at my table. "I like a clever woman," he announced. "Would you care to dance with me?"

I rose to dance. Threading our way among the tables to the dance floor, we met a couple returning. The girl pounced on him. "Oh, there you are!" she exclaimed.

I hastened to relinquish him, but she insisted that we go on and finish the dance. "That's the girl I came with," he explained. "She had the tickets." We exchanged names and nationalities. He was a *sabra*—native-born.

Toward the end of the dance *he* had an inspiration. "I have it!" he exclaimed with a snap of his fingers. "At about two o'clock I'll take the other girl home and come back for you with my car. Then we can go some place." I declined with thanks. He urged me to drive to Haifa with him on Saturday. I declined again.

I asked him to escort me to the vicinity of the dance band. From afar I saw my friend with the broken leg sitting alone and

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desolate. The band was having a short respite, and the other members were congregated in the bar. He could not move until somebody helped him. As I pushed my way through the crowd toward him, myriads of men appeared out of nowhere.

"*At k'tana,* you are small," said one slim young man with arresting green eyes who was dressed in the long black tights and loose white shirt of a ballet dancer.

"It's true I'm not very tall," I replied.

He laughed contagiously. "*K'tana* means chic, too," he explained in English.

"So are you *katan,*" I said admiring his splendid physique.

"Oh these," he said deprecating his attire. "These are my working clothes. I'm a dancer," he added parenthetically.

"I sing in the opera," put in another man, a little man even smaller than I. "Come to hear me Tuesday night in *Rigoletto.*"

I fought my way through to the piano player on the now crowded dais. The rush was not wholly for me, I discovered. Everyone who could sing, everyone who could act, everyone who could dance, was dancing toward the microphone to perform if he could. I sought out the piano player, thanked him profusely, said good night, and went outside for a breath of fresh air.

THE next night I went to another Purim ball—the social event of the season, both expensive and exclusive. The dance was preceded by a concert of the Israel Symphony Orchestra under the baton of a famous American conductor. I had heard him many times in Boston. It was not a costume ball, as I had thought, but my Chinese dress with the gold shoes was quickly converted to a short evening gown when I removed my mask. All the debutantes of Tel Aviv were there, many wearing bouffant evening gowns direct from Paris. Most of the men were older, either fathers or uncles, for few young men in Israel could afford the price of admission.

Though the space for dancing was small, the music was superb and some people were dancing on the stage. During the intermissions, the men in tuxedos and the women in elaborate evening gowns danced the *hora*—the exuberant, stomping national dance of Israel. My escort, the dancer who had been at the Four Arts Ball the night before in his working clothes, tonight was dressed soberly in his best party-going suit. He said he did not know how to dance the *hora,* and the younger girls, the debutantes, seemed to think the dance gauche. The older men danced the *hora* with gusto, recalling their younger days when they were poor pioneers, not rich businessmen. I danced the *hora,* too.

On Friday evening—the Sabbath Eve—no public celebrations were being held. But it was *Shushan Purim,* the "Persian" celebration, and there was an elaborate private garden party nearby. The garden was attached to a huge mansion in central Tel Aviv. It was lighted by Japanese lanterns and there was soft music wafting from behind the shrubbery where a string quartet was hidden. White-coated waiters had been hired for the evening and moved noiselessly and faultlessly, serving the guests at the many small tables that had been set out. It was a perfect setting for an enchanted evening.

No snob, I crashed the public Yemenite ball, too, on Saturday night. If it had been physically possible, I would have gone to every Purim ball in Tel Aviv. But there was only one of me.

After the long week end of Purim revelry, I tallied up the balance sheet: one nonserious proposal; seven earnest propositions; one pair of golden shoes worn paper thin. Ah, Purim in Tel Aviv. . . .

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THE STUDY OF MAN

PROFESSOR CARR'S "WAVE OF THE FUTURE"

Western Academics and Soviet Realities

BERTRAM D. WOLFE

EDWARD HALLETT CARR's three-volume work *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923* impresses us by its massiveness, by the author's audacity in tackling so overpowering a subject, and by his unerring sense of which Bolshevik utterances and decrees reflect significant turning points in their policies—or in their public accounts of their policies. These three large volumes were preceded by a number of preliminary studies, and, as I write, Professor Carr—who teaches at Oxford—has just launched the first volume of a new series on Bolshevik Russia, *The Struggle for Power, 1923-1928.*

But when one tries to analyze Carr's historical method, the organization of his materials, the problems he sets himself to answer, and the problems he ignores, admiration begins to diminish.

The structure is puzzling. Volume I consists of three parts: "Lenin and His Party"; "The Constitutional Structure"; "Dispersal and Reunion." Part IV, "The Economic Order," takes up all of Volume II. And Part V, "Russia and the World," makes up Volume III. But where, the reader asks, is "the Revolution"?

Despite their over-all title, it is to be found literally nowhere in these three volumes. There is doctrine but no clash of ideologies or faiths; famine is without hunger; revolution without bloodshed; titanic social transformations are but documents bereft of clashes, tears, or exultations.

Terror, to Professor Carr, is merely the subject of a doctrinal dispute in Bolshevik circles. For him terror neither measures the magnitude of resistance, nor the degree to which a regime may be incompatible with the normal desires of the people over whom it rules. Never for a moment does he see terror as the war of a government on a people. Nor does he conceive that it may shape the nature of that government, have a lasting effect on those who wield it, or on those subjected to it. Nor does it involve for him any moral issues. As the juggernaut rolls over its victims, not once does professor Carr count them up, consider their human fate, identify himself in imagination with

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PART of the subtler propaganda for the Red, as it was for the Brown and the Black, totalitarianism, is the "argument from success." It is made under all sorts of guises, not the least formidable of which is the scholarly. How insidious this university version of "the wave of the future" can be is shown by the largely uncritical reception, at least in this country, of Professor Edward Hallett Carr's *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923* (Vol. I, *The Political Revolution,* 430 pp., $5.00; Vol. II, *The Economic Order,* 400 pp., $6.00; Vol. III, *Russia and the World,* 614 pp., $6.00; Macmillan). Here an eminent expert in the same field closely analyzes this work's main assumptions and shows how they affect its presentation of fact. BERTRAM D. WOLFE was born in 1896 in Brooklyn—where he still lives—and educated at City College, Columbia University (M.A.), and the University of Mexico. Formerly Chief of Ideological Advisory Staff of the Voice of America, he has now returned to his original career as a free-lance writer. He is the author of many books, among them a life of Diego Rivera, and the first volume of a history of the Russian Revolution, called *Three Who Made a Revolution* (1948), the second volume of which is shortly to appear under the title *The Uses of Power.* Mr. Wolfe has also contributed to numerous magazines such as *Harper's,* the *American Scholar,* the *Russian Review,* and the *Antioch Review.*

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their point of view. Unconsciously, he seems to imagine himself with those in the driver's seat.

Probably the most important problem for any historian of the Russian Revolution is the nature of totalitarianism and the totalitarian state. This question is examined nowhere in these three volumes. And since the "struggle for power" which is to be treated in the forthcoming books covering the period 1923-1928 is limited by his method to merely the internal struggle between Lenin's lieutenants after his death, it is not likely to be treated there either.

Professor Carr is aware, as many of his critics have not been, that the Revolution is not in his book, and offers an explanation in his preface. Originally he intended to write of the Soviet Union as an already going concern, "not a history of the events, but of the political, social and economic order that emerged from the Revolution." In other words, he intended to start from the age of Stalin. He felt, however, that he needed "a long introductory chapter to analyze the structure of Soviet society as it was established before Lenin's final withdrawal from the scene in the Spring of 1923." The introductory chapter grew and grew until it became these three volumes.

This may help explain the awkward structure of the work, but not the choice of its title. Nor does it explain the approach and principle of selection—an omission all the more obvious because Professor Carr's preface sets it as the historian's task "to combine an imaginative understanding of the outlook and purpose of his *dramatis personae* with an overriding appreciation of the universal significance of the action."

Let us apply the two criteria of Carr's statement of the historian's task to his own book. Again we find something unaccountably missing: where is the "overriding appreciation of the universal significance of the action"—the meaning for the Russian people, and mankind, of the seizure and consolidation of Bolshevik power? Nowhere in the three volumes.

To find out what constitutes for Professor Carr the "universal significance" of the Russian Revolution, one has to go to his earlier studies. In one of the first of these, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, Professor Carr called on his contemporaries to adapt themselves to the fact of rising revolutionary power—conceived of by him at that time in terms of Nazi Germany. But his most explicit and certainly most relevant statement of "the universal significance of the action" came after the war, in a series of lectures delivered at Oxford in 1945 and 1946 (while the present work was in gestation) and published in 1947 as *The Soviet Impact on the Western World*. Carr's basic presuppositions are revealed in the grand summary with which this book closes:

"The age of individualism now drawing to its close stands in history as an oasis between two totalitarianisms—the totalitarianism of the medieval church and the new totalitarianism of the modern world. . . . The contemporary trend away from individualism and towards totalitarianism is everywhere unmistakable. If individualism be defined as the belief that the individual mind or conscience is the final human repository of truth, and that every individual must therefore in the last resort make his own judgments, totalitarianism is the belief that some organized group or institution, whether church or government or party, has a special access to truth and therefore the special right and duty of inculcating it in members of society by whatever means are likely to prove most effective.

"For four centuries, from 1500 to 1900, individualism was the main driving force of civilization. . . . But during the first half of the twentieth century the tide has turned sharply. The contemporary trend away from individualism and towards totalitarianism is everywhere unmistakable. . . . Of modern political philosophies, Marxism is the most consistently totalitarian and has the widest appeal; the country which has officially adopted it . . . has dazzled the world by its immense industrial progress, the spirit of its people and the rapid development of its power.

"Two world wars, a series of major revolutions, and an economic collapse whose severity was mitigated and curtailed only by wholesale departures from the old individualist tradition, have sufficed to produce a startlingly rapid change of moral climate, and to convince all but the blind and the incurable that the forces of individualism have somehow lost their potency and their relevance in the contemporary world.

"Seen therefore in the broadest historical perspective, the impact of the Soviet Union on the Western world symbolizes the end of that period of history which began in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. . . . Like other great historical movements, the Bolshevik revolution

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was self-assertive and highly dramatic in its setting and consequences. But like other great historical movements, it owed its success not merely to its own power and to the enthusiasms which it generated among its disciples, but to the inner crumbling of the order against which it was directed."

THIS is not the place to consider Professor Carr's appreciation of our age, but it is necessary to note some of the ways in which it has affected his approach as a historian of the Russian Revolution.

1. To most historians, the term "totalitarianism" does not cover every form of despotism, autocracy, and absolutism, but means specifically a historically new phenomenon requiring the modern great state and modern technology. Before a state can entertain the idea of controlling all organizations, all activities, all thoughts and feelings and utterances within the borders it rules, it must have roads and railroads, autos and planes, telephone and wireless, universal literacy so that all may read and say the same thing, control of all schools, churches, meeting halls, street corners, walls, newspapers, books, movies and photo-making, plus a monopoly of physical force and knowledge of how to condition human beings psychologically.

For Professor Carr, however, totalitarianism is as old as humanity. It is a universal phenomenon only briefly interrupted for a few decades in a single city-state called Athens, and for a few centuries in a lesser peninsula of Asia called Europe. But the day of democracy and individualism is gone, and the shrewd observer should have been able to notice it since the beginning of our century. The issues that democrats, liberals, constitutionalists, democratic and agrarian socialists thought they were fighting over in Russia had really been settled before the Bolsheviks ever seized power. Their opponents lost because they *had* to lose—why examine their futile opposition? Bolshevism won because it *had* to win—why concern oneself with its conspiracies and preparations? What does it profit the historian to study the programs, the struggles, the "blind and incurable" illusions, the truths of the defeated? Professor Carr's sense of historical inevitability even exceeds Lenin's.

2. Most historians would regard the question of state power as a question of more and less, and would consider the question of this more and less to be a substantive one in the study of institutions and philosophies. The opposite of the total or totalitarian state ("All for the state, all through the state, nothing against the state, nothing outside the state") is generally taken to be the limited state, whether its limits be the checks and balances applied by other state institutions or by non-state activities and non-state organizations, or by constitutional law, or by unwritten laws and customs felt as binding by both rulers and ruled—or whether the limits consist simply in the importance and rights conceded to the individual.

But for Professor Carr, constitutional limits on authority are always "bourgeois," democracy is always "bourgeois democracy" and gets in the way of history and "the proletarian revolution." The achievements of the 1905 revolution in Russia—"the granting of a constitution, the Duma, the formation of political parties"—are dismissed as "bourgeois." The overthrow of the Czar by democratic elements was a "bourgeois" revolution. The establishment of a democratic government which, to Professor Carr's unconcealed disdain, insisted on considering itself "provisional" and saw as its main task the convocation of an assembly to write a constitution, the work of which it did not wish to forestall by *faits accomplis*—this government, too, was "bourgeois." But the overthrow of this democratic provisional government and the seizure of power by a well-armed and energetic minority was "*the* proletarian revolution" (my italics).

When the largest trade union in Russia, backed by many Bolshevik leaders, foreseeing a long period of bloodshed, civil war, and brutal minority dictatorship, tried to force Lenin to agree to a multi-party government in which all the socialist, labor, and peasant parties would be represented, he refused. Professor Carr observes that if he had accepted this proposal it would have "proved that the time was not yet ripe for a specifically proletarian revolution." Thus all the other socialist and workers' parties of Russia were "bourgeois," too.

The Constituent Assembly is a target of Professor Carr's irony. Elected by the entire people in the only free election held in the entire history of Russia, and containing an overwhelming socialist majority, it is called "the crown of the democratic revolution, but an anachronism once that stage had been superseded by the proletarian socialist revolution." This sovereign body, convoked with Bolshevik approval to write a constitution, proceeded to

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adopt the Social Revolutionary agrarian program which Lenin had just openly admitted taking as the basis for his own agrarian program. Carr finds this "coincidence" to be a "proof of the Assembly's bankruptcy." The Constituent Assembly showed, moreover, little appreciation of what went on in the "world outside," for it "ignored the concentration of effective power in the hands of the proletariat," not seeming to know that "the proletarian revolution had in fact occurred."

Since Professor Carr had already sympathetically expounded Lenin's idea that in a backward land "a bourgeois revolution can occur without the bourgeoisie," one would think that he might at least have raised the question whether a "proletarian revolution" could occur without the proletariat. Or—what is really a central problem for a historian—whether the Bolshevik revolution does not confront us with a new kind of *coup d'état* that was neither palace nor class revolution, but a seizure of power by a new type of party, the party of a classless elite, which established a new kind of bureaucratic ruling class and a new totalstatism. Such a revolution, unlike Marx's "proletarian revolution," can occur just as easily—in fact, more easily—in a backward country with relatively little bourgeoisie, and relatively little proletariat, than in an advanced one.

THE question is never raised whether the class framework is a useful instrument for the analysis of power relations. Class division, class struggle, class rule, and class analysis are taken for granted. It is not a party, a politburo, a dictator, or a bureaucracy that rules, but—the proletariat. Professor Carr takes the Soviet Union's paper constitution and its decrees at face value, never raising the question of the real relations of power which are any country's true constitution. He defines the new Bolshevik power as a "dictatorship of the proletariat powerful enough to crush bourgeois opposition." But he never asks why this dictatorship's chief job from that day to this should have been the crushing of *peasant* opposition, *worker* opposition, and even *Communist* opposition.

In such a framework, we cannot expect a historical account of how such opposition arose or what it was about. Nor any analysis of alternative paths, moments of choice and contingency, the programs of other groups or parties. All opposition had outlawed itself, Professor Carr announces, "since no opposition party was prepared to remain within the legal limits set by Lenin." But Lenin himself defined dictatorship as "power based directly on force and *unrestricted by any laws*" (my italics).

4. Since, for Carr, "totalitarianism is the belief that some organized group or institution, whether church or government or party, has a special access to truth," all political parties would appear to be totalitarian, and it would be a matter of indifference whether there were a multi-party system in which each party offered its own special "access to truth" to the electorate, or a single party that outlawed all others, and even all differences within its own ranks. Professor Carr would be expected to show no interest, as indeed he does not, in the Bolshevik claim to have "created a party of a new type." On one of the few occasions in which he uses an emotion-tinged word, Carr warns that "There is some danger in regarding these centralizing tendencies as peculiar to the Russian party—or to Lenin. It was everywhere a period of the rapid extension of large-scale organization. . . . In no great country were political parties immune from these tendencies."

II

CARR'S other requirement for the historian is "an imaginative understanding of the outlook and purpose of his *dramatis personae*." But we find only one *persona* in his pages.

Lenin enters on page 5, and on page 6 we read: "In 1901, Lenin first began to emerge head and shoulders above his fellow editors." They included the veterans Plekhanov and Axelrod, who were surely more than his peers at that time, and Martov, who was his equal. "From the foundation of *Iskra* Lenin became the pace-maker of advanced ideas within the party." Since Lenin's only difference with his fellow editors at that time was his belief in more rigid centralization and an elite guardianship over the rank and file and the proletariat, we must conclude that these were the *advanced* ideas. "Lenin ran further ahead of his *Iskra* colleagues. . . ." Not *apart* but *ahead*. His "central plan" of organization was "built upon a sound basis of theory. . . ." Then come "his immense learning," "his unique greatness," "the greatest revolutionist of all time," "his genius," which "was far more constructive than destructive," etc., etc. His "major achievement came after the bloodless victory of October 1917, and was that of a great constructive statesman."

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Clearly, this historian will have no difficult problems of evaluation, no great need to search alternative paths, little room for "an imaginative understanding of the outlook and purposes" of other *dramatis personae*. Where the hero is so heroic the conflicts cannot be dramatic; the other personages are mere embodiments of fragments of momentary opposition, shadows flitting past the sun, foils to luminous greatness, objects of quiet irony and vast, condescending scorn.

Kamenev and Zinoviev, when they oppose Lenin, are "united in an inglorious partnership" —although what was inglorious about it except that they opposed first Lenin, then Stalin, and died under executioner's bullets, is hard to say. Lunacharsky and Bogdanov are said to have "broken with Lenin" when actually it was he who broke with them by expelling them from the party for differing with him on a tactical matter.

Throughout these three volumes we get Lenin's side of every serious controversy, and only that side. His doctrines, categories, and modes of reasoning are so expounded that it is frequently difficult to tell whether Carr is merely paraphrasing them without subscribing to them, or advancing opinions he holds in common with Lenin, or working out a more "reasonable" statement and defense of Lenin's views and acts than Lenin himself had thought of. Often all three types of exposition are so subtly woven together as to make it impossible to separate them.

The section on Lenin's nationalities policies (Part III: "Dispersal and Reunion") expounds his views so uncritically that it is hard to believe Professor Carr is not being ironic. He draws up a "balance sheet of self-determination" that proclaims: " 'The right to separate,' in the phrase once used by Lenin, was being replaced by the 'right to unite.' " "In principle," Carr continues, "it was unthinkable that any socialist nation should wish to secede from the socialist community of nations; in practice it was unthinkable by the end of 1920 that any one not irrevocably hostile to the Soviet order should wish to break up such unity as had already been achieved. Unity was as necessary for full economic development as it had been for military security. The plain interest of the workers and peasants was unity on the widest possible basis." Thus the "balance sheet of self-determination" turns out to be apologetics for annexation.

III

VOLUME II, *The Economic Order*, offers massive evidence which would lead any other historian or economist to conclude that Lenin understood little of the actual economic machine, of incentive, money, banking, production, exchange, and other economic processes, and that he bears a heavy responsibility for the economic breakdown and the famine in Russia after the civil war. Professor Carr's unerring instinct for the crucial decree or utterance actually makes an overwhelming case for Lenin's economic illiteracy, but his unbounded admiration for Lenin, plus his own economic preconceptions, prevent him from drawing the obvious conclusion.

If the Bolsheviks were clearer about what political institutions they wanted to destroy than about what they wanted to put in their place, they were even surer about what they wanted to destroy of the economic fabric and even less clear about what they wanted to replace it with. Carr tells us that Lenin thought he could eliminate all "bourgeois specialists" and substitute "the armed workers"—only to acclaim him a moment later for his wisdom in recalling the specialists and to blame the latter for their hostility to a program that envisaged their liquidation. We find Lenin believing that he could publicly condemn the bourgeoisie to extinction yet expect them to continue to stay and run their factories until he got around to getting rid of them. He thought he could confiscate all the crops and stores that the peasants produced beyond what was necessary to their mere subsistence, yet have them continue to produce surpluses. He called for the shooting on the spot of the "bagmen," peasants who brought to market a few pounds of bread, a few eggs or chickens to trade for city-made goods after the Bolsheviks had broken the normal ties between town and country. Carr writes as if the break between town and country had been due to some act of God, or to the civil war alone and the ungrateful recalcitrance of the peasant, and quotes admiringly Lenin's later decision to restore private trade and to view the "bagman" as "a creature who instructs us extremely well in economics."

The Communists are pictured as destroying the cottage industries, the home and one-man knitting, weaving, baking, and shoemaking shops, and the other tiny enterprises that supplied so much of Russia's consumer goods, when they could neither "socialize" these dwarf

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enterprises nor set up anything to replace them. We find that neither Lenin nor Professor Carr shows any understanding of the price mechanism or of money. The Bolsheviks seriously thought that they could abolish money and claims on money by running their printing presses full speed until all monetary claims were worthless and until gold, as Lenin wrote, would be used only to build public toilets. And we see Lenin mistakenly assuming that under capitalism the banks actually run all industries and "control" them, so that all the Bolsheviks had to do was take over the banks in order to get control of industry and run it.

To be sure, war and civil war, as Carr suggests, wreaked their frightful toll, but he tells the story too well not to provide the evidence with which to refute his own tendency to blame everything on sabotage, war, and civil war. It becomes clear that the Bolsheviks destroyed a lot of Russia's going economic order simply out of blind doctrinaire hostility and their own failure to understand that order—destroyed so much of it that, as Professor Moseley, reviewing the volume in the *New York Times Book Review*, has tartly remarked, Carr's "Economic Order" could equally well have been entitled "Economic Disorder."

IV

Volume III deals with "Soviet Russia and the World." Its primary concern is with foreign policy in the conventional sense, although it also deals with the Comintern and world revolution. As might be expected from a writer who came to history from diplomacy, this is Professor Carr's best documented and, indeed, only well-organized volume. It, too, gives ample evidence of Lenin's failure to understand the outside world and of the countless errors he made because of his belief that the proletariat everywhere was waiting to be liberated and that the Russian Revolution was the beginning of an immediate world revolution. Yet Professor Carr's faith in Lenin's genius and the clarity of his vision still does not waver.

One can deduce from the evidence he presents, though he himself has no sympathy with this view, that Lenin, like the Mensheviks, believed until 1914 that what Russia needed and was facing was a democratic revolution. It was the war, which Lenin took to be capitalism's "final crisis," and his belief that the war could only be ended by revolution, that made Lenin decide to disregard Russia's immediate future and the democratic revolution, and stake all on the hope that a revolution in backward Russia would set off a world proletarian revolution. Professor Carr explains it otherwise: "World revolution was the counterpart in Soviet foreign policy of war communism in economic policy. . . . It was in fact imposed upon the regime, not so much by doctrinal orthodoxy, as by the desperate plight of the civil war." In another passage, he writes that the slogan of world revolution was the Bolshevik reaction to foreign intervention and was adopted "if only in the interests of self-preservation."

Thus the author actually denies the whole system of thought, the very creed by which Lenin lived and on which he acted. Professor Carr believes that totalitarianism is the wave of the future, and believes in the Bolshevik Revolution for Russia, but he cannot quite get himself to believe that, in the matter of world revolution, this power-concentrated, dogmatic man was in deadly earnest. This is why the weakest section of his third volume is the one dealing with the Comintern.

One other element of Professor Carr's analysis of Soviet foreign policy is worth noting for what it reveals of his approach and method. Both in this volume, and in a special study published during the same period, Professor Carr discusses Soviet-German relations as a key to the future of both countries and of Europe. His knowledge of diplomatic history being superior to his mastery of political history, not to speak of economic history, the special study is highly illuminating. It is Carr's thesis that Germany has been successful in its foreign policy only when it has "cooperated" with Russia, whether Czarist or Soviet. He finds a pinnacle of "success" in the Stalin-Hitler pact of 1939-41—which, to quote from Professor Moseley's review of this volume, once more can only lead one to suppose that " 'success' means the conquest of numerous independent nations and the calling into being of a worldwide coalition against Germany. It is not clear what new 'success' present-day Germany could achieve through 'cooperation' with the Soviet Union unless it be to cooperate in over-running the rest of Europe, and thus in perpetuating Soviet rule over itself as well."

When Lenin leaves the scene, Professor Carr's story comes to an end. The party at the time of Lenin's exit from active life; the constitution and state structure; the economy

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when Lenin was no longer able to intervene; foreign relations and the Comintern as Lenin left them—these are the terminal points in the various sections of the three volumes.

"A month after Lenin's final incapacity," reads one of the closing sentences, "under the shadow of an imminent economic crisis which was already compelling rival leaders to take up positions. . . ." Thus does our historian lay the basis for his further books, on *The Struggle for Power, 1923-1928*.

The difficulty is that 1923 did not mark the imminence of an "economic crisis," but saw a visible economic recovery which was to continue until the end of 1928 and which, in retrospect, can be seen as the golden age of the Soviet economy and of mass well-being. It was not "imminent economic crisis" but Lenin's exit, and the struggle for the succession, that "compelled rival leaders to take up positions."

True, these "positions" dealt, among other things, with the question of whether the economic recovery was to be permitted to run unchecked, or whether it was to be deflected, controlled, and altered by a new revolution from above. It was the triumph of one of the contenders for the leadership and his application of unstinting force to the peasant and the worker which led, in the 1930's, to a one-sided development of heavy industry at the expense of consumer goods and mass well-being: to a crisis of imbalance in industry, and a permanent crisis in agriculture, that have continued to the present day.

In view of Professor Carr's statements that "the pitiably low productivity of Russian agriculture . . . could not be raised . . . on a basis of individual peasant holdings," that "the adequate feeding of the towns was ultimately incompatible with a system of small-scale peasant agriculture," and that "the arguments in favor of large-scale agriculture, whether from the standpoint of theoretical socialism or of practical efficiency, were irrefutable," one wonders what he makes of Khrushchev's reluctant admission, a few months ago, that Russia now produces less cattle, meat, butter, cheese, and grain *per capita* than she did in 1928. One has the uneasy feeling that Professor Carr's new work on the years 1923-28 will have a pro-Stalin bias equal to the pro-Lenin bias in those at hand—and the same totalitarian assumptions.

A WORD should be said on Professor Carr's reputation for scholarship and objectivity. His footnotes, impressive for their volume and pertinence, testify to the fact that he has waded through an incredible amount of documentary material in fugitive books and pamphlets scattered all over the world. They show an unerring sense for the key sentence of the decrees, speeches, pamphlets, and pronouncements which marked the changing Bolshevik attitudes or apologetic explanations. But the fundamental documentation is invariably from the Bolshevik point of view, and, within Bolshevism, from the Leninist one. Thus the scholarship is at one and the same time documentation and unavowed apologetics.

As for Professor Carr's reputation for objectivity, one is a bit more puzzled. Can it be that in academic circles, and more particularly in British ones, an urbane tone, and the air of saying the most horrendous things as if one were expounding, not advocating, their gist, is sufficient to win a reputation for objectivity? For actually, Professor Carr is saying truly horrendous things. He is telling us that totalitarianism has already won the battle for the world, that the struggles, the programs, the hopes, and the truths of the defeated are no longer worthy of the historian's attention.

Professor Carr is dazzled by power and success. When the Nazis seemed to wield absolute power and enjoy absolute success he was quietly urging that other powers accommodate imagination and policy to the inescapable historical reality Hitler constituted. Now with the same imperturbable appearance of objectivity, the same is said with regard to Lenin, Stalin, and their new order. In his earlier studies of revolutionaries—Bakunin, Marx, Herzen, and the "revolutionary romantics"—Professor Carr took refuge in irony. Now irony has deserted him. Marxism is "the most attractive of the totalitarianisms," Lenin is genius incarnate, and the arguments in favor of Stalin's war on the peasants are "irrefutable." Professor Carr's coolness is due to the lack of a historical imagination capable of digesting the magnitude of the issues and of the struggle still in progress; and it is due, also, to an imperturbable conviction that the struggle today involving Bolshevism is a mere rearguard action, with its issues already settled. Thus one has to conclude that the cold hard core of this history of the Bolshevik Revolution is undoubtedly apologetics for what Professor Carr is convinced is the wave of the future.

"Morituri te salutamus."

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LETTERS FROM READERS

The Hillcrest Center

To the Editor of Commentary:

As rabbi of the synagogue-center described in the article ambitiously entitled "New Jewish Community in Formation" by Morris Freedman (January 1955), I must state that the article proved to be a great disappointment. . . . I expected a sober discussion and serious analysis of the religious, educational, cultural, and social aspects of the synagogue-center program. Instead, I found Mr. Freedman bogged down in a multitude of irrelevant details about the physical aspects of the building and surrounding stores. . . . Do these form the essence of a "new Jewish community in formation"? Does Mr. Freedman feel that this is the best way in which to shed light on the "widely mooted questions concerning American Jews today"? Would not a few paragraphs about the building have sufficed so that more space could have been given to the generic ideological issues facing synagogue-centers? . . . Mr. Freedman dwells on each one of the stores adjacent to the Center. He even jumps across the street with remarkable alacrity to describe the stores on the second block. Had he not stopped in the middle of the next block he would have found a police station which, no doubt, would have helped us understand the Hillcrest Jewish Center better. . . . Hillcrest is not an exclusively Jewish community. Approximately 40 per cent of the residents are non-Jewish. They, too, buy in stores. Does Mr. Freedman imply "guilt by association"?

Mr. Freedman is guilty of some inaccuracies, not all of them of equal importance. I shall merely point out a few. He speaks of "United States Representative Samuel Rabin." Samuel Rabin is not a United States Representative but a Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York. He quotes me as saying, in connection with the engaging of Mr. Refregier, "We heard some silly business about him and some trouble in San Francisco, but that didn't bother us." I could not possibly have said that for the records will show that the San Francisco matter came up *after* Mr. Refregier had been engaged and not before. Mr. Freedman also implies that I, personally, and the Committee knew about Mr. Refregier's background and that when he pointed it out to me, I said, "Does it make any difference?" What really occurred was that Mr. Freedman indicated some suspicion of Mr. Refregier's background and also informed me that he would proceed to investigate it. I felt that this would not help with the analysis of synagogue-centers in Queens. I merely said, "The murals are already up. Does it make any difference *now*?"

I was amazed to find Mr. Freedman putting quotation marks about statements attributed to me and to other members of our staff. The fact is that Mr. Freedman took no notes during the conversation he had with us. What he reports are mere recollections. . . .

Mr. Freedman was gracious enough to show me a portion of his article for comment. . . . I . . . indicated to him that I would reserve comment until I could see the complete article. When I did receive it I was disturbed to see myself and other members of the staff misquoted in many instances. . . . I immediately telephoned Mr. Freedman requesting him to make some changes. . . . In fairness to Mr. Freedman, I must say that he regretted very much that Commentary was going to press and that it was too late to make any changes. You will agree with me, however, that it is highly unfair to leave the impression of a verbatim, direct quotation when it simply isn't so.

I found the most objectionable feature of the article to be the mood and atmosphere which pervades it. Mr. Freedman believes in citing details to illustrate larger principles. He should therefore not object if I use the same technique in pointing out what I mean.

In discussing the mosaic panel on the doors of the Ark executed by the famous artist Raymond Katz, I explained to Mr. Freedman that Mr. Katz faced the difficulty of presenting one theme on two doors that stood a little apart from each other. I casually mentioned to him that Mr. Katz hit upon the idea of placing half of the lion in the mosaic panel on one door and the other half of the lion on the other door so that the figure of the lion would pull the entire panel together. But Mr. Freedman does not speak of the two halves of the lion. He speaks rather of "rump and waving tail on one door and his mane on the other." The Rabbis, in commenting on the Biblical verse "the beasts

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that are clean and the beasts that are not clean," observed that the one word, *tome*, would have sufficed for the expression "that are not clean." The Rabbis therefore draw the inference that the Bible, by using eight superfluous letters, teaches us to avoid the use of words with harsh and ugly connotations. The Ark is the most sacred place in the Synagogue. What prompted Mr. Freedman, in describing it, to use "rump" and "tail"?

Let me cite another example. Mr. Freedman speaks of the Eternal Light "hung in a sleek brass cage." I have the highest regard for Mr. Freedman's literary ability and I need not tell him what the word "cage" connotes as opposed, for example, to the word "enclosure." According to Webster the word "sleek" "often signifies something hypocritically smooth and unctuous." I am sure Mr. Freedman knows how sacred the Eternal Lamp is in Jewish tradition. Why, then, the expression "sleek brass cage"?

MR. FREEDMAN makes bold to accuse Hillcrest of concentrating on "grandeur in the externals." Every paragraph of his article shows clearly that this is merely a projection of his own preoccupation with externals. Let me cite a few examples.

We have at Hillcrest two nursery school classes. Mr. Freedman devotes exactly one brief sentence to them. . . . Mr. Freedman told me time and again that he had heard some very complimentary remarks about our Hebrew school. Yet none of these are in his article. He didn't bother to visit any of our classes and didn't take the trouble to see the school in actual operation. Is this not as important to an understanding of the synagogue-centers as, for example, his puzzling preoccupation with the art work which he discusses at such length? . . .

My Youth Activities Director informs me that Mr. Freedman did not discuss the Youth Program with him. Our entire Youth Program, which is quite extensive, is not given as much space as the bridal room with the toilet in the closet. . . . Is it not significant that we have, besides the adult service and two junior congregation services, also a regular Sabbath service for teen-agers? I know that all synagogues would have been interested in an evaluation of this program.

Mr. Freedman even found the energy to climb down a few flights of stairs so that he might see our gymnasium and shower rooms and describe them in some detail, but he has not a single word about our Sisterhood. Is the position and role of the woman in the synagogue-center unimportant? . . . I can go on to mention the Men's Club and other groups which are essential to the rounded program of our Center. . . . What grieves me and perplexes me more than anything else, however, is the fact that he did not attend a single service.

It is disturbing that Mr. Freedman discusses so many externals and does not find space for a brief paragraph on prayer and the spiritual aspect of synagogue-center life. Hundreds of people attend our services both on Friday night and Sabbath morning. How are these services conducted? What draws people to them? Is this not as important as the description of the kitchen, and the refrigerator with the trays of chopped liver? . . . Is he not aware of the fact that there are Jews who have spiritual needs and have them fulfilled through the synagogue?

I had hoped that Mr. Freedman would attempt to convey to the readers of COMMENTARY some of the ideological motivations which brought about this new institution in Jewish life which we call "synagogue-center." I pointed out to him that the synagogue-center is dedicated to the philosophy that Judaism must encompass the totality of human living. I stressed to him the traditional concept of the synagogue as not only a House of Prayer but also as a House of Study and a House of Assembly. I do not wish to reopen the discussion on catering in synagogue-centers. Suffice it to state that if a member's daughter is named in the synagogue and is Bas Mitzvah in the synagogue, there is every reason why she should also be married in the synagogue; and if a wedding is to be held, catering is merely an accommodation to the members but by no means an essential or important part of the synagogue-center program. We tolerate it as a service to our members, but I have all along had a vague suspicion that financially it might not even pay. . . .

MR. FREEDMAN conveys the impression that our Center is an exclusive club obsessed with but one idea—financial status. Is a membership of over thirteen hundred families a sign of exclusiveness or rather of mass appeal? I discussed with Mr. Freedman the make-up of our Board, pointing out that our leadership includes many teachers and young professionals. Mr. Freedman should have told the readers that the leadership of Hillcrest is composed of dedicated workers interested in building Jewish life in our community—regardless of financial status. I discussed at some length the very gratifying fact that our synagogue was built through a large number of small contributions. We did not receive any large amount from any one individual. I am proud of many things at Hillcrest, but most of all of its truly democratic structure. . . .

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I would like to conclude with the comment that a "tongue-in-cheek" style may be acceptable or even desirable in a discussion of some topics but not in a serious appraisal of a community into the building of which had gone so much planning and labor, inspiration and dedication. The Jew is bid by his tradition to differentiate *"ben kodesh l'chol,"* between the sacred and the profane.

(Rabbi) Israel Mowshowitz
Hillcrest Jewish Center
Queens, New York

Mr. Freedman *writes:*

The object of my article on Hillcrest was to describe closely a specific example, in the semi-suburban metropolitan area, of the widespread growth of Conservative "synagogue-centers" throughout the country, a most important phenomenon in American Jewish life. The extensiveness and rapidity of the development are likely to make it inevitably less than perfect in certain respects, and perhaps the greatest service that can be done in behalf of genuine self-appraisal is to consider the reality soberly, without censoriousness or sentimentalized self-gratulation. My aim in writing was neither to "accuse" nor to "praise," and Rabbi Mowshowitz was apparently aware of my warm appreciation of the problems and achievements of his Center. Certainly, my showing him the typescript indicates my concern to be accurate, not only in detail but in emphasis.

Rabbi Mowshowitz feels that my article placed too much emphasis on the physical aspects of his Center (although may I say that architecture and art are scarcely "physical," unspiritual things). But this was his own emphasis in our long discussions, as the full notes I took while with him (and still possess) indicate clearly, and was moreover the way in which the Center impressed itself on me.

The rabbi read an early text of the article, as he says (the typescript, which we went over together, is extensively marked with his suggested changes, every one of which was made). With the exception of a few added paragraphs which I read to him over the telephone, this was the actual text of the final article. Only one short sentence was not read to him over the telephone; but this was so precise a quotation that I do not feel derelict.

The Rabbi writes that "the San Francisco matter came up *after* Mr. Refregier had been engaged and not before." He was vague as to when Mr. Refregier was first hired at the time we discussed the matter. The fact is that the murals were dedicated, according to a brochure issued by the Center, on January 22, 1954, some five years after Refregier had first been widely criticized on political grounds for his work in the Rincon Annex Post Office in San Francisco. And a long article defending Refregier on this matter was published in the *Nation* of September 26, 1953, just a year earlier. Refregier's reputation was never hidden; his associations and sentiments were well known and easily ascertainable. The Rabbi seems to have been as indifferent to Refregier's specific background and subject matter as he was to Justice Rabin's specific office, which he gave to me as indicated in the article (of course I should have checked the identification myself). His "What difference does it make?" referred not only to the *fait accompli,* but to the content of the art work itself.

The Rabbi's objections to my choice of words are part of his general attempt to substitute the vague and abstract for the concretely descriptive, although I happen to think that "cage" is more felicitous in context than "enclosure," which happens not only to be inaccurate but to suggest a pen for sheep. The more common (and innocuous) meaning for "sleek" precedes the Rabbi's quotation from Webster's. As for the description of the lion's anatomy on the doors of the Ark, the Rabbi should not forget that the lion itself happens actually to be there in just that way. I do not, myself, find anything "harsh and ugly" about such words as "rump" and "tail."

The Rabbi probably forgot my telling him that I observed daily services on three different occasions, including a Sunday evening; these were in no way of such a nature as to affect anything I wrote. Friday night and Saturday morning services, being combined with the elaborate Bar and Bas Mitzvah occasions, more social than religious in character, do not give an accurate picture of the specifically spiritual activity of the Center. As it happens, at the time I was visiting the Center, in the summer, no classes were in session and youth activities were suspended. But my interviews with members of the community, including teen-agers, persuaded me that my description of youth activities (or of any of the social activities) would not have been changed by actual observation; the points the article made would merely have been elaborated by more details. However ambitious and praiseworthy the youth program, the fact is that the Center is not yet affiliated with United Synagogue Youth, the official organization which maintains standards. The Rabbi has also apparently forgotten that the youth director was not appointed until after my article was completed.

There is nothing inherently invidious in the descriptions—for example, the description of the Center's physical surroundings, which hap-

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pen to be part of the reality. The true values of the Center are certainly not to be found in pious but non-existent idealizations, in a merely verbalized religiosity. If the Rabbi were to look closely and candidly at all the things we talked about, and which I recorded, he would certainly find enough "ideas" to give him thought. He would also find that the tone of my article was in sum actually more sympathetic than the attitude among a substantial portion of the rabbis and leaders of the Conservative movement who have expressed vigorous doubts about the emerging pattern in such centers as Hillcrest. It is perhaps not insignificant that only one other Conservative rabbi has written to us criticizing the article, and that we have indeed been called to task for *not* attacking the tendencies in Judaism and Jewish community life that centers like Hillcrest represent for many quite vocal critics, religious as well as "secular."

I am sorry that the article was not read in an open spirit by Rabbi Mowshowitz. He has, among other things, overlooked its numerous explicitly favorable comments (on the high level of the school, in spite of the lack of adequate library facilities and the absence of official recognition; on the community enthusiasm for the new youth annex, in spite of the repeated postponements of the ground breaking; and so on). The "widely mooted questions concerning American Jews today," on which it was hoped that this article might shed some objective light, will never be discussed fruitfully unless the community learns to look at itself systematically, dispassionately, honestly, without any institutional bias, however uncomfortable this process may be.

The "Animal Farm" Mystery

To the Editor of Commentary:

Spencer Brown ("Strange Doings at 'Animal Farm,'" February 1955) has written an excellent account of the reluctance of New York's film critics to associate *Animal Farm* with the Russian Revolution. His is the kind of article that has for so long made Commentary the "must" magazine for anyone who still attaches importance to that terribly old-fashioned concept of intellectual honesty.

It may be taken for granted, I think, that the Crowthers, the Guernseys, the Winstens, and the other critics are good people who would not lightly distort Orwell's or anyone else's fable. They have on various occasions, in fact, and with varying degrees of eloquence expressed themselves on the subject of falsification when films have been made of literary works. . . . One need only reread their reviews of such films as *Romeo and Juliet, From Here to Eternity, The Caine Mutiny,* or *Alice in Wonderland* to see in what high esteem "sticking-to-the-original" is held. In this connection, one might also note the recent distress of Mr. Crowther in the *Times* and Mr. Winsten in the *Post* over excisions made in *Wages of Fear,* an indecent new film of anti-American and anti-human sadism directed by a former collaborationist of the Nazis, H. G. Clouzot. Both critics felt the picture would have benefited had more of its original anti-American sequences been allowed to remain.

Why, then, have these people, each of them a serious student of the cinema, seen fit, all on their own, to distort George Orwell during the brief journey from the screen to their typewriters? Why have they so unconscionably undertaken to mislead their readers into believing that Orwell wrote about some anonymous "Power State" and not about Russia; about a dictator and not about Stalin; about a secret police and not about the NKVD; about totalitarianism and not Communism? Why did they ignore the anti-Soviet point in the Orwell film and then virtually beg for a restoration of the anti-American point in Clouzot's film?

One hears much these days about the fears of the intelligentsia, the mantle of silence that it is said has enveloped, for example, the teachers and the writers of the nation. I am not a teacher or a writer, but I have read speeches and writings by such reliable observers as Dr. Commager and Dr. Urey, and I have listened to Dr. Oppenheimer. I have read them and listened to them through the best and most effective means of communication anyone in history has ever had—not off some hidden hand press, or at a secret cellar meeting, or over some Radio Free America, but in the mass-circulation magazines, the metropolitan newspapers, over the national television and radio networks. A mantle of silence? An atmosphere of fear? Permit me to make an unhappy joke: I can't hear the silence for the noise; I can't see the fear for the breast-beating.

Yet there *is* a fear, though not the fear that Commager and Urey are talking about, among the intelligentsia today, and the reviews of *Animal Farm* (along with the cleverly edited quotes on the jacket of the new edition of the book) are both the result and the proof. It is, simply put, a fear to be anti-Communist.

This fear to be anti-Communist is the offspring of interesting parents—the Communists and their supporters on the one hand, and Joe McCarthy on the other. The Communists, of course, have a self-evident stake in the begetting of this unnatural child. By equating

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anti-Communism with McCarthyism, they have been able to put a halter on anyone of the nice intelligentsia who might boggle at their shenanigans on behalf of their Mother Country across the sea. McCarthy's stake in this union has been the strengthening of his brag that only McCarthy is truly anti-Communist.

And so the Crowthers and the Guernseys and the Winstens and the others in the intelligentsia, who would rather be dead than "nonprogressive," are caught in an unlovely squeeze. . . . They have tossed away the historic privilege of liberals to fight tyranny and oppression, resigned from it in favor of, heaven help us, Joe McCarthy.

To have called *Animal Farm* an anti-Communist, anti-Soviet film would have been to tell the truth about it. But the Crowthers, the Guernseys, the Winstens and the others apparently believe that it is better to be "progressive" than accurate. Let's not red-bait, I can imagine them telling themselves, for red-baiting is "McCarthyism." And they sat down and wrote what they did without stopping to consider how they might be helping to shield the Soviet Union.

Both the Communists and McCarthy have reason to be satisfied. As they regard the timidity and the fears of the intelligentsia, they know that they are the happy parents of a big bouncing baby monster.

ALBERT MARGOLIES

New York City

Prophecy Not Without Honor

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Paul Willen's keenly analytical and prophetic article "Can Stalin Have a Successor?" (July 1953) has been dramatically confirmed by Malenkov's sudden downfall from apparent power. I suspect most readers of your magazine didn't appreciate the significance of Mr. Willen's contribution when they read it.

Willen pointed out that Malenkov's speech at the 19th Party Congress in the fall of 1952 was quite routine. If Stalin had really meant Malenkov to be his successor, he wouldn't have given him so humiliating a role at that Congress. Before Stalin's death, Willen went on, the succession question was never alluded to in the Communist press anywhere in the world. The explanation? "The whole deification campaign [of Stalin] presupposed everlastingness; how can one allow even the suggestion of the death of a god?" Malenkov may have represented the wishes of the bureaucrats who wanted a vacation in which to enjoy the fruits of victories already won. He looked like the potential leader of an opposition which might try to "liberalize" the totalitarian structure of Soviet Russia.

Willen pointed out that the new leaders of Soviet Russia, however, must restore "to the throne . . . its initiative as the expander and oppressor, the inaugurator of plans, and merciless persecutor of 'enemies.'" This too-little heeded article should be reprinted and re-read today. It is representative of other penetrating articles which have appeared in COMMENTARY.

WALTER R. STOREY

Philadelphia, Pa.

[With what we hope is pardonable satisfaction, we direct our readers' attention further to Boris Meissner's "The Kremlin's Terms to the West" (June 1952), which pointed out, eight months before Stalin's death, that Beria, Malenkov, and Khrushchev already dominated the party apparatus, and that a "shift in the balance of power has permitted Marshal Bulganin, who has the confidence of the army as well as of the state and economic bureaucracy, to come forward." Mr. Meissner also wrote that Beria and Malenkov had formed a common faction against Zhdanov, and then against his surviving supporters. Those mystified by references to the "Leningrad case" in connection with the recent announcement of the execution of Abakumov, former Soviet Minister of State Security, allegedly for his handling of that case, would have learned from Mr. Meissner's article that "One group [in the old Politburo] was Great Russian in national composition and based on the party organization in the Russian Federated Soviet. Leningrad was its center. . . . Zhdanov, Slicherbakov, Andreyev, and Voznesensky were its members."

In May 1953 Franz Borkenau, in "Was Malenkov Behind the Anti-Semitic Plot?" referred to Bulganin as "a close associate of Lazar Kaganovich (who was opposed to both Zhdanov and Malenkov)"; and mentioned Khrushchev as "possibly the most up and coming of all the Soviet bosses."—ED.]

Liberty and "Due Process"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "Libertarian Precepts and Subversive Realities" (January 1955), Mr. Alan F. Westin says that he is making a criticism of the "application" of civil liberties principles that he does not question. But if that is really so, then what was the point of his article? Surely Mr. Westin does not believe that the injustices and absurdities of the loyalty-security program would have been any less if the imaginary liberal he conjures up had not attacked Dies and McCarthy or supported Hiss and Lattimore. What success, for instance, did the American

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Civil Liberties Union (which never supported Hiss, and only to a limited extent Lattimore) have when, in 1947, it urged that this program be restricted to really sensitive positions (as has been all along the case in England)? And no recognition of the right of an employer privately to question an employee (which has not been challenged) would have mitigated the effect of the "Fifth Amendment Communist" slogan reiterated by the junior Senator from Wisconsin.

The truth of the matter is that defeats in the field of civil liberties are inevitable in times like these. And Mr. Westin in no way indicates how they could have been averted. The real issue is whether the true libertarian will let his principles bow with the wind in the vain hope of not so often seeming defeated. . . .

It may be true, as Mr. Westin suggests, that libertarians place too much reliance on the courts. That has been so largely because they have found more effective allies in the courts than in other agencies of government and because a court fight is an effective organ for public education. But to describe this "court-seeking psychology" as a "flight from responsibility" and as the cause of the "security-firsters" taking over is a complete misreading of history. Recourse to the courts has never been a first step. It has always followed (and by many years) the action already taken by those indifferent or antagonistic to liberty.

Perhaps the true meaning of Mr. Westin's approach is to be seen in his criticism of the libertarians' concern with procedure, with "due process." That is always the point of attack of those impatient to get things done. In the long run it will prove more important to preserve fair procedures than to convict a dozen Coplons. (As a matter of fact, reasonably decent police work would have insured her conviction anyway.) And it is not lack of understanding of the "revolutionary" character of our times that underlies this attitude. The world has witnessed countless revolutionary times. Always attempts to restrict liberty have been justified on the plea of the necessity of those times. Always a few men have withstood those pressures. They have been remembered: Lilburn, Voltaire, Peter Zenger, Tom Paine—in our day an Arthur Garfield Hays. . . .

Osmond K. Fraenkel

New York City

Early Resort Discrimination

To the Editor of Commentary:

An example of discrimination at a vacation resort antedating by a generation the one given by Charles Abrams (". . . Only the Very Best Christian Clientele," January 1955) is to be found in Matthew Hale Smith's *Sunshine and Shadow in New York* (1868). A certain Long Branch hotel attracted leading families with the express understanding that Jews would be excluded (pp. 452-53). Smith, who characterizes lower-class Jews as "disagreeable," also informs us that when any considerable number of Jews moved into a neighborhood, the Gentile populace would leave. New Yorkers of the Civil War era, according to this source, invariably asked, before buying a house, whether any Jews lived on the block.

Benjamin J. Klebaner

The City College of New York
New York City

"Judaism in Islam"

To the Editor of Commentary:

May I say that I read Rabbi Gerson D. Cohen's review of Professor A. I. Katsh's *Judaism in Islam* (February 1955) with a great deal of pain. It reads not like an academic criticism but a vendetta. The spirit as well as the style is deplorable. I found Dr. Katsh's book to be sufficiently well written for the average man; sufficiently learned to be appreciated by the scholar. What the reviewer calls "swollen notes" represents indeed the fruit of careful study and a fine moral sensitiveness giving credit to all his sources. . . .

In my own thesis I used Geiger's famous opus as well as the Arabic commentaries cited in *Judaism in Islam*. I would unhesitatingly describe Dr. Katsh's book as a real contribution to Judeo-Islamic learning and of great importance in the study of comparative religion. The running commentary in particular deserves much praise.

My objection is based not only on your reviewer's ungracious failure to acknowledge the solid value of the study, but on *dikdukei aniyut* —the stressing of five-and-ten-cent items as if they had basic significance. . . .

(Rabbi) Leo Jung

New York City

Correction

To the Editor of Commentary:

I wish to correct the erroneous statement made in my article "Storm Over the Investigating Committees" (February 1955) that the National Lawyers Guild is on the subversive list and to express my regret for this unfortunate error.

James Rorty

Flatbrookville, New Jersey

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

New Look, Old Illusions

AMERICAN IN RUSSIA. By HARRISON E. SALISBURY. Harper. 328 pp. $4.00.

Reviewed by PETER MEYER

"GENERALLY speaking it seems apparent to visiting Americans that Georgians lead a comfortable existence. Food is plentiful, cheap and varied. . . . Prices are well below Moscow levels. . . . Georgian peasants generally speaking are in the high income class. . . . City life is also comfortable. . . . Strain and tension are absent." (New York *Times*, June 6, 1951.)

"Americans in the diplomatic colony continue to travel rather widely about the Soviet Union and seldom find that international tension has materially affected the traditional Russian hospitality." (New York *Times*, October 14, 1950.)

"Foreigners in Russia have generally found that there is little difference between the views expressed by ordinary Soviet citizens and those placed on record by such leading Soviet organs as *Pravda* and *Izvestiya*. . . . This correspondent has discussed the matter with Soviet citizens. Nothing in any of these conversations gives cause for belief that there is the slightest cleavage between Soviet citizens and their government. . . . Any supposition abroad that such a cleavage does in fact exist or is likely to develop, is wishful thinking at best and may be extremely dangerous." (New York *Times*, October 14, 1950.)

"Let there be no mistake about it—the news of Premier Stalin's illness is profoundly sad to the ordinary man and woman in Russia. . . . Many believers and worshippers of the Russian Orthodox faith hurried to churches this morning and sank to their knees in prayer for the recovery of Premier Stalin . . . simple peasant men and women were lighting candles on church altars for the man who to them personifies their very country." (New York *Times*, March 5, 1953.)

"When Stalin died, [Moscow was a city] of silence, solemnity and sorrow. . . . [Malenkov has already begun to show] the will and determination to prove the worthy custodian of the policies and monolithic unity and steel resolution [of Stalin]. . . . [He stood at Stalin's bier] with sadness in his youthful face. . . . Tonight Mr. Malenkov became the man who is picking up the torch of the Soviet state and the Communist Party and leading the government and Party along the pathway laid out by Stalin." (New York *Times*, March 7, 1953.)

These excerpts from Harrison E. Salisbury's dispatches from the Soviet Union are typical of what he sent the New York *Times* while its correspondent in Russia from 1949 to 1953. Readers of his stories on life under Stalin got the impression that it was quite comfortable and the standard of living was rising rapidly. All the country's energies were devoted to peaceful construction. Not only the people but also the government sincerely desired peace. Fear and tension were absent.

But now we read in Mr. Salisbury's book, composed of articles he published in the *Times* after his return from Russia, that the great majority of the Soviet population leads a drab and wretched existence; it is housed in slums, fed a monotonous and exigent diet, and compelled to work under conditions and on terms little different from those of slave laborers. We hear about surreptitiously built atom-proof shelters in the Moscow subway and an armaments industry working full blast. It transpires that Salisbury, who spoke with authority in his dispatches about the mood and sentiments of the population, had little contact with them; he was certainly in no position to carry on frank political conversations with the people at large. Nevertheless, he saw enough to understand the all-pervasive fear and terror, which reached a climax shortly before Stalin's death, after the allegations of a Moscow "doctors' plot," when the dictator was apparently preparing a far-reaching purge that would have taken millions of victims, including many of Stalin's nearest collaborators. Salisbury thinks

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that Stalin might have been killed by his aides to head off the purge; in any case, his death was their salvation. Malenkov, who stood at Stalin's bier "with sadness in his youthful face," was very likely, we now read in *American in Russia,* one of Stalin's murderers. And Salisbury describes the immense relief with which the dictator's death was greeted.

How account for the glaring differences between these two pictures of Soviet Russia today? We cannot lay it up to the Soviet censorship. The censors certainly suppress a good deal, but they cannot make American correspondents write to their dictation; and indeed Salisbury, who cites examples of material censored from his dispatches, at no time says that the censor made additions to his copy. So it is himself who is responsible for the statements about cheap and plentiful food, comfortable city life, absence of fear and tension, unrestricted travel by foreigners, and the complete harmony between the views of rulers and simple citizens. Other correspondents in Moscow, including the present *Times* representative Clifton Daniel, have also been hampered by the censorship, but did not then proceed to fill out their reports with fiction. Four years of Salisbury's misinformation, conveyed by the most influential newspaper in the United States, has perhaps done more damage than the best book in the world can repair.

THE present book, *American in Russia,* undoubtedly contains some useful reporting on Soviet life today. Because foreign correspondents are compelled to live in virtual isolation from the Soviet people we get only glimpses of this life, but very interesting glimpses nevertheless. The description, for example, of the empty and graceless life led by the marginal Soviet "intelligentsia" that Salisbury obtained from a girl who taught him Russian (and who reported on him to the secret police but could not abstain from gossiping about her friends among the actors and dancers), is very telling, as are the glimpses of suburban life Salisbury got in the summers at his *dacha* in the village of Saltikovka. We catch sight now and then of the immense secret police empire in East Siberia where slave labor gangs and concentration camps are so familiar to the inhabitants that they pass them by without a thought.

Salisbury, as always, is a sympathetic interpreter of the Russian people, but his understanding of the Communist regime still leaves much to be desired. "I did not know the Russian language," he writes in the first chapter; "I was no specialist in Soviet affairs. . . . I had never read Marx or Lenin and hoped I never had to. . . . The fact was that on the doctrinaire side I simply knew very little about Communism." The first deficiency was quickly repaired; the second was a more serious matter. Salisbury's ignorance of, indeed repugnance to, the "doctrinaire side" of Communism is responsible for the slapdash simple-mindedness of his economic, political, and social interpretations of the Soviet regime. For him Bolshevism can be elucidated by the personalities of its exponents. A totalitarian system with its own iron necessities, stamping its agents and upholders in its own images, and not to be altered by a "change of heart" on some bureaucrat's part—this becomes for Mr. Salisbury largely an affair of personal machinations.

Consider his explanation for the terror, intrigues, and purges of the Stalin regime. In Stalin's native land, Georgia, in the city of Tiflis, he saw a performance of *Othello.* It was played in Georgian, which he does not understand, but the actor in the title role was outstanding and he felt a new understanding of things: "It is life. Georgian life. It is the blood and the tragedy and spirit of Georgia. . . . It seemed, by then, that my trip to Georgia had given me all the keys I needed to understand the complex character of the man the world knew as Josef Stalin. . . ." Stalin was a Georgian, and Georgians, like Othello, are vengeful, suspicious, paranoiac. These are "all the keys" one needs.

If Stalin's personality was the main cause of the Communist terror, his death must naturally be expected to introduce an era of relief and mitigation. And Stalin's successors were, in Salisbury's opinion, really different men. These were not (except for Beria) Georgians with an Othello complex, but realistic, businesslike, fundamentally decent people ready to compromise differences. Malenkov was, in spite of his appearance, full of old-fashioned grace and courtesy: once he picked flowers for Miss Edith Summerskill, once he brought a chair for the aged Russian woman-doctor, Olga Lepeshinskaya. Khrushchev was a hail-fellow-well-met, bluff and hearty, a diamond in the rough; Molotov was quiet, patient, and reasonable; Mikoyan clever; and so forth.

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It does not accord with Salisbury's view of these men, but all of them had also been Stalin's eager and brutal henchmen: Malenkov his right hand in the Great Purge, who had drawn up the endless proscription lists for the executioner Yezhov; Khrushchev the director of the forced collectivization drive and ruthless purges in the Ukraine. About Molotov's "reasonableness" Western diplomats can tell us something; in Molotov's own phrase, it is "well known."

The post-Stalin era, according to Salisbury, captained by such men, was to see the triumph of collective leadership. "Collective leadership is no mere catchword," he writes, "these men are seriously trying to make it work." In March 1953 Salisbury predicted lasting solidarity among the members of the new Presidium. Beria's fall in June of that year proved him wrong. Whereupon he predicted complete harmony among the remaining rulers, based on such childish reasons as the public appearance together of the members of the junta, their always leaving together at diplomatic receptions, etc. When signs of a rift between Malenkov and Khrushchev were noticed by dozens of knowledgeable observers abroad, Salisbury was condescending. He writes in his book:

"Spurred, perhaps, by wishful thinking . . . a good many 'experts' in the United States and Europe increased their speculation regarding a possible Malenkov-Khrushchev rift. I doubted this as did other men in Moscow whose judgment I felt was reliable and conservative. . . . The most significant fact about the group is how well it works together (now that Beria has been done away with) rather than any question of rivalry. Of course, events may prove these impressions mistaken, but, so far, every foreigner who has met both Malenkov and Khrushchev or has seen them both together will give you odds that Malenkov is top dog and that, in any showdown, he would take Khrushchev. . . ."

After Malenkov's fall, Salisbury commented in the New York *Times* that he had not expected the rift to develop so fast!

His estimation of other features of the Soviet "New Look" is no more fortunate. He saw "reformism" in domestic affairs, a tendency to subordinate ideology to common sense, an effort to reinvest trite party shibboleths with moral content, a mitigation of the dictatorial control, an increase in consumer goods and services, and a more pacific foreign policy.

But even in the brief heyday of the New Look these things were more wish than reality. There was no relaxation of the dictatorship, the new rulers rather following Lenin's example (during the NEP period) of strengthening the dictatorship in periods of economic retreat. The interlude of relative "liberalism" in the arts was only a repetition of what occurred many times before under Stalin: when everybody writes or paints exactly according to the line, the products become impossibly jejune and tedious. Whereupon a cry is heard for more creative, livelier, better art and the party rule is relaxed a trifle; some bold soul then hints that the arts need freedom and the bureaucracy gives a convulsive start, pulling the reins just as tight as they were before.

Russia's milder tone in foreign affairs was aimed principally at the European and Asian powers—to disrupt the free world's alliances and isolate the United States. Towards America the Soviet government continued to show much the old hostility. There was nothing very new about this milder tone; indeed, it had been inaugurated by Stalin and ratified by the 19th Convention of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in October 1952.

The only real change was the emphasis on the production and distribution of consumer goods. But this was soon to be undone when Khrushchev won the long intra-party struggle and reversed the policy of trying to offer something to the consumer, and also overthrew Malenkov. The stress is again on heavy industry and armaments.

MANY observers, including some on the New York *Times*, were able to follow the ball. They knew, as every schoolboy should know by now, how unwise it is to mistake shifts and turns as proof of the Soviet regime's becoming more benign and democratic. In 1921, when the country was on the verge of collapse and Lenin invited individual peasants, private tradesmen, and foreign capitalists to collaborate economically with the Soviet government, many foreign observers, disregarding his open declarations that this was only a temporary retreat, predicted the "inevitable transformation" of Soviet dictatorship into a "new kind of democracy" with a "mixed economy."

In 1924, when Stalin proclaimed his doctrine of "socialism in one country," many saw an end to Communist attempts at "world rev-

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olution," disregarding again Stalin's repeated assertions that a final clash between the capitalist and Communist worlds was inevitable.

In 1936, after the horrors of forced collectivization, similar optimists saw a definite turn to "stabilization" and "democratization" in the Stalin constitution—whereupon the Great Purge followed, churning up every area of Russian society and taking a toll of millions.

Stalin is now the great bogeyman of the hopeful blind, but in his day he knew how to play the reasonable, realistic, and genial elder statesman—there is even a journalistic literature about his charm. How his succession to the "fanatical" Lenin, his triumph over the "doctrinaire" Trotsky, was taken as an augury of better times! And now Salisbury praises Stalin's heirs in just these terms, and may be expected to praise the heir of the heirs. For wishful thinkers, only dead Soviet dictators are cruel and oppressive; the living always have—as a member of this school might say—"a moderation, wisdom, and urbanity it would be the height of recklessness to allow exaggerated domestic emotions to blind us to."

The Abusable Past

THE WORCESTER ACCOUNT. By S. N. BEHRMAN. Random House. 239 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by ISAAC ROSENFELD

IF WE let S. N. Behrman get away with a species of murder in *The Worcester Account,* it is not only because of his reputation or the fact that most of these reminiscences first appeared in the *New Yorker,* but because of the high sentimental regard in which most of us hold his themes: the small town (Worcester, Mass.), time past (the beginning of the present century), boyhood and adolescence. Such subjects are notorious for ringing bells in the head; and when the life reported is Jewish life, we are conditioned (Jews and Gentiles alike, I should think) to adopt an attitude more appropriate to dining than to reading. A whole genre has grown up on the public sentiment for the taste and feel and smell and image of the tender past, no matter what: let it be grandmother's potato *latkes* or grandmother herself, there's no real telling them apart, for they swim side by side in a medium halfway between tears and saliva, and one doesn't know

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whether one should weep or pull up a chair. This is the genre of *delicious* writing (COMMENTARY has lots of it, see "From the American Scene," and I myself have done my share), and Behrman serves up a masterful dish. Who cares if his words sometimes grate on the ears like the very streetcars he writes about ("I was etching matching configurations with my thumbnail") or if he composes a classy sentence like the following: "He must have been lost in the phantasmal jungles (reanimating what dead of his own?) and his cry for the little glass of warmth symbolized the desire of all of us to break off the winding filaments of the nightmares that bedevil us and find a foothold on the tiny, lit plateau, incessantly eroded by time, that is everyone's fragment of reality"? Whether you pursue it with a napkin or a handkerchief, the remembrance of things past is an end in itself.

THESE memoirs have their good moments, when Mr. Behrman takes his themes seriously and works them for more than their sentimental value. In the chapter "A Little Glass of Warmth," he even takes himself seriously and attempts a reconstruction of the past which makes sense—one can see why he should need or want to relive it; this is on the basis of a dream about the dead, his brother, and his best friend, Willie Lavin. Behrman wakes from the dream muttering the phrase, "A little glass of warmth," and traces it to the cry for a glass of tea, *ein glaesele warems,* with which his father, now also dead, would wake from his own troubled dreams. In this manner though the recollection is made to rise from the personal intimacy of sensation and its immediately associated images, the past means more than a taste, a *tam,* and the dead, who are revived by a natural reverence, come to stand on a plane higher than edibility. It is an experienced, an authentic past, and one can believe in it because it is evoked by a writer in touch with himself.

But only in the passages that deal with death—primarily the ones that have to do with his father and mother and his friend Willie—does Behrman allow his characters to come to life from within his own life. The rest of the time he writes from a point of view external to his own, and regardless of what he presents —the gang, the girls, swimming on summer afternoons, sodas in the evening, the holy rabbi to whom he was related or the rabbi's irrepressible daughter, a *shadchanteh,* who shocked everyone by striking up conversations with strangers and marrying them off to her clients—his interest is not in life but in charm and quaintness, calculated to keep the reader wiping his cheeks and his chin. This cannot be Behrman's point of view, for what reason would a writer have to charm himself? He becomes a smiling waiter, bowing at the table. Here the double gimmick on which a good deal of this genre is based comes into view, one part cash, one part externalization. I mean by the last word, which I use for want of a better one, the tendency to surrender to outsiders one's own life, one's purpose, point, and perception, one's need to revive oneself through reliving the past, to give it all away, as though the pleasure and approval of the audience alone had the power to raise the dead. This is "other-directedness" with a vengeance. The next step is to dump everything into the other's lap, and let him take over not only the past but the living of the present life as well.

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T.R. and Patrician Rule

THE REPUBLICAN ROOSEVELT. By JOHN M. BLUM. Harvard University Press. 161 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by EDWARD N. SAVETH

THERE was more to Theodore Roosevelt than the grimace, toothy grin, and pristine vigor which are his trademark—not unlike the stripes on Uncle Sam's pants. His blustering hundred per-centism; his busting up and cracking down; his treading softly and carrying a big stick; his "Gentlemen, the Almighty God and the Just Cause are with You"; his boy scout morality (which was gratified by the suicide of Tolstoy's heroine Anna Karenina)—all these have endured in the national character beyond the interment of the mortal Roosevelt at Oyster Bay in 1919. Some of the chief issues with which he wrestled as President of the United States between 1901 and 1908 have also endured, notably those of big business regulation and foreign policy; his administration was in many ways a curtain raiser on our own era, both domestically and internationally. Particularly relevant to our own time is Roosevelt's wrestling with the problem of power; on this theme of power Professor Blum has based his narrative.

Sensible enough to recognize the inevitability of bigness in business (and in labor and government as well), Roosevelt distinguished between "good" and "bad" big business. To keep business hewing to the path of virtue, he put his faith in the administrative commission. But would the administrative commission, of which the Interstate Commerce Commission was the first of many, be more moral in the exercise of power than the businessmen themselves or the judiciary whose job was to interpret the laws? Roosevelt felt that the saving element in the administrative commission was the "expert," who could arrive at decisions that were relatively uninfluenced by political pressures and more in keeping with the realities of a situation as appraised by an informed and impartial mind. It was Roosevelt's hope, and to some extent his belief, that politics would stop short at the administrative commission's door.

Mr. Blum perhaps fails to see Roosevelt's

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Knowe Thy Selfe

"The moste excellent and imcomparable vertue called justice is so necessary and expedient for the gouernour of a publike weale, that without it none other vertue may be commendable, ne witte or any maner of doctrine profitable" . . .

So wrote *Sir Thomas Elyot* in his book *The Gouernour,* published in 1531. . . . "Verely the knowledge of Justyce is nat so difficle or harde to be attayned unto by man as it is communely supposed, if he wolde nat willingly abandone the excellencie of his propre nature, and folisshely applicate him selfe to the nature of creatures unreasonable, in the stede of reason embrasinge sensualitie, and for societie and beneuolence folowinge wilfulnesse and malice, and for knowledge, blynde ignoraunce and forgetfulnesse.

"If thou be a gouernour, or haste ouer other soueraygntie, knowe thy selfe, that is to saye, knowe that thou arte verely a man compacte of soule and body, and in that all other men be equall unto the. Also that euery man taketh with the equall benefite of the spirite of life, nor thou haste any more of the dewe of heuyn, or the brightness of the sonne, than any other persone. . . .

"Therefore whiles thou wearest it, knowe thy selfe, knowe that the name of a soueraigne or ruler without actuall gouernaunce is but a shadowe, that gouernaunce standeth nat by wordes onely, but principally by acte and example; that by example of gouernours men do rise or falle in vertue or vice."

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faith in the wisdom and impartiality of the expert as a typically patrician solution to the problem of power and partisanship in American democracy. Roosevelt thought of the patrician class from which he derived as above and aloof from the contending forces of labor and capital; and as birth and breeding raised the patrician above the battle, so did knowledge elevate and make impartial the specialists. Whether Roosevelt's faith has been justified depends, of course, upon one's judgment of the role of administrative commissions in the last fifty years.

In foreign policy, on the other hand, not the mediating expert but naked power decided for Roosevelt. He was convinced that world peace and world order could best be served by the strong nations policing the weak, and by a power balance among the strong nations resulting in temporary stability; he looked to manifest destiny rather than international arbitration to resolve the great questions of world politics.

SEEKING to serve the good society ("But what is 'good'?" as Morris R. Cohen used to ask), Roosevelt repeatedly compromised his goals (which moreover were highly personal and subjective) in the interests of his career. There are a number of reasons why he assumed the leadership of the Progressive movement, but more than anything else it was a power tantrum. Because Mr. Blum has followed the thread of the power theme through the mass of Roosevelt materials, he has not fallen into the error of some earlier biographers who offered two Roosevelts to the reader: Roosevelt the President, and the later, more radical Roosevelt of the Bull Moose movement. Actually, Roosevelt's radicalism—a belief in greater governmental control of the large unit in industry and labor—was of the sort that Frank Munsey, the millionaire publisher, Thomas Perkins, a Morgan partner, and Andrew Carnegie (who tried to dissuade Roosevelt from becoming a candidate in 1912, but went along with the principle that increased governmental control was inevitable) were able to endorse.

Roosevelt was no radical. But I am dubious of the reasons Mr. Blum advances for calling him a conservative: his belief in consolidation, control, administrative efficiency in government, and his failure to acknowledge happiness as a political goal. Mr. Blum argues further that these so-called conservative values were upheld by the businessmen of the time. I wish he had given us his footnotes here, because I know of no definitive study of businessmen's attitudes in the era of Theodore Roosevelt, let alone one that would justify such a conclusion.

Actually, the characteristics of Roosevelt's conservatism, as Mr. Blum gives them, belong to no one American political tradition but more or less to all. I should agree that Theodore Roosevelt was a conservative, but less because of his identification with the business elite than because of his patrician heritage, whose roots go back politically to the Federalists and socially to the pre-industrial merchant capitalists and gentry. After all, the prophet of competition, control, and strenuous efficiency in government was Roosevelt's fellow patrician, Brooks Adams, whose *Law of Civilization and Decay* Roosevelt reviewed approvingly at length (though he demurred from its gloomy conclusion). Similarly, a model of Roosevelt's ideal

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administrative commissioner might easily have been Charles Francis Adams, of *the* Adamses, and his work on the Massachusetts Railroad Commissioners Board. In the introduction by Brooks Adams to *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma* in 1920, we can see how many of Theodore Roosevelt's ideas have been a part of patrician thought since the time George Washington made his unique contribution to American administrative practice. More than a trace of this patrician heritage was apparent in Franklin Roosevelt, not only in his personality but also in his conception of the proper relation of government and business.

But so good a book as *The Republican Roosevelt* should not be judged by its difficulties in dealing with the knottiest problem of our historical heritage—the nature of American conservatism. A practitioner of the newer political history, Mr. Blum has given us a fine example of an approach to politics that is no longer content with the older emphasis on bare and unelucidated political fact, but draws on psychology and sociology as well. His brief book recreates Roosevelt and the problems of his era where longer and more detailed portraits have failed.

Judaism as Historical Process

FESTIVALS OF THE JEWISH YEAR. By THEODOR H. GASTER. Sloane. 308 pp. $4.00.

Reviewed by SYLVIA ROTHCHILD

THERE have been many books published about the observance and history of the Jewish festivals: little books of questions and answers for those who want to learn Torah while standing on one foot, collections of sayings from Scripture, and thick anthologies of stories, songs, services, and children's plays. They all end, however, where Dr. Gaster's book begins. They write of present-day Judaism in terms of the past. Dr. Gaster discusses the past of Jewish observance in terms of the future.

It is Dr. Gaster's belief that non-observing Jews have left the fold, not because they did not know how to remain in it, but because they did not see why they should continue ancient customs that held no personal meaning for them, either in their earlier or latter-day forms. He focuses attention, therefore, on the basic concepts, hidden by archaic expressions and practices (or by present adaptations or vulgarization), yet often as meaningful today as two thousand years ago. Dr. Gaster believes that it is what the Bible conveys, not what it says, that is important. He sees Judaism, "not as a creed to be determined or imposed . . . by a sanhedrin or college of rabbis, but the spirit of an entire people attuned to hear a Voice . . . and ready . . . to answer together, 'we will do and we will hear.' "

Aware that such acceptance can only come out of deep love and understanding, he hopes to increase the understanding. He does not address himself to those whose rejection (or acceptance) of Judaism is merely emotional and unreflective, but to those who want to understand and will listen if the explanation is honest, makes sense, and meets their deep needs.

TRADITIONAL Judaism considers the festivals ordained by God. Modern understanding finds their development from pagan festivals God-inspired. Though the traditional-minded person may find it disrespectful to look objectively at sacred institutions, fearing that the beauty and wisdom may be lost if their primitive origins are shown, Dr. Gaster's book would prove that the direct opposite actually happens. And, indeed, his descriptions of the spiritual ingenuity of Jewish teachers and scholars in transforming the customs and ideas of other peoples only increase one's awe of their wisdom. A day of taboo was turned into a day of study and renewal. The fear of physical evil developed into fear of moral sin. Physical purgation was replaced by spiritual atonement. Lamentations for the fallen temple of a defeated goddess had a counterpart in a lament for a sinning people and a God who had forsaken them. The value and meaning of the result is repeatedly enhanced by the knowledge of the raw material from which it was fashioned.

If the Jew is, as Dr. Gaster describes, *in* the larger world, influenced by those close to him and influencing in turn, we can profitably examine the connection between Shavuoth and Whitsun, Purim and Carnival, Lag B'Omer and the Witches' Sabbath. Dr. Gaster repeatedly distinguishes between imaginings and facts; yet he gives respectful weight to legends and stories that have been accepted and cherished by so many generations, granting apparently that they acquire a truth of their own that cannot be dimmed by scholar's theories and archaeologist's

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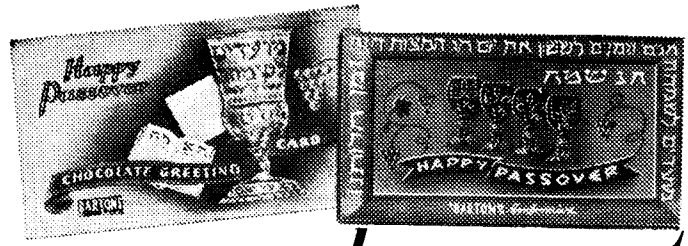
discoveries. He gives some understanding of the way that historians piece their puzzles together, the final version never sure. The scholar's humility in the face of the difficult task of unearthing the truth is always apparent.

Dr. Gaster insists that certain basic human reactions to life and nature appear very much the same in all eras and in all parts of the world, however much his descriptions of Jewish festivals emphasize the differences between Jews and other peoples. In the chapter on Succoth, therefore, we find information about a primitive Mara tribe in northern Australia. The chapter on Yom Kippur contains not only an explanation of the difference between a day of purgation and a day of atonement in our modern understanding of the holiday, but, along with translations of the most moving prayers in the service, we find discussions about customs of purgation among the Greeks, the Japanese, the Bechuana of Central Africa, the Dinkas of the White Nile. Such marshaling of historical parallels from diverse, un-Jewish sources may tend to make the traditional-minded person unhappy, yet Dr. Gaster so uses his miscellaneous information as to get the last drop of understand-



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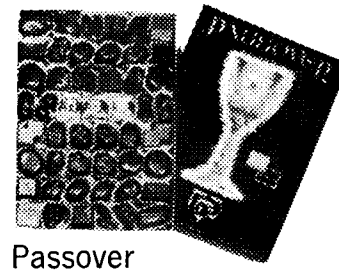

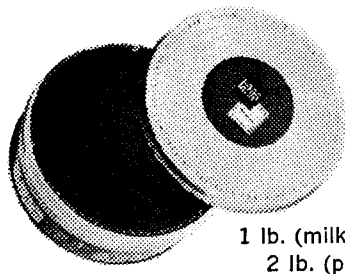

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ing for the basic religious reactions he describes, and for their relevance and meaning as they appear in Judaism. The primitive rites of purgation, for example, in their simplicity and drama, tell us more than the kind of modern philosophizing explanations, in terms of "basic ideas," concepts, and essences that we have had offered to us as "keys" to the understanding of a Judaism that actually *evolved* from such early celebrations of the presence of God in nature, history, and the life of man.

Dr. Gaster holds that all Jewish festivals have a universal aspect as well as a particular Jewish significance. Yet he finds the Jewish expression of universal truth and ideals so unique that to combine or equate it with any other is to lose its essential meaning. The history of the festivals is important to him because they contain the history of the *Jewish* spirit and give us a sense of the *Jewish* community as it has existed in its continuity through the centuries. But their meaning is to be spelled out not merely by the past, but in the future. The festivals provide an opportunity for those who would rededicate themselves to timeless virtues, to goals still unattained and values that have not yet gained acceptance. Particularly Passover, Purim, and Chanukah are such festivals.

The book, accordingly, focuses throughout upon the living meaning and the value of the festivals, not on any theories about the origins or development. The theories are there not to expose but to explain. And they so explain as to build understanding and identification, not reduce them. In Judaism, reason and faith are not in competition.

Seen together in this way, the festivals belie the impression that Judaism is a sad and forbidding religion. We mistake seriousness and maturity for somberness. Dr. Gaster tells us that the festivals celebrate God's providence; the fasts, his anger. The modern overwhelming emphasis on the solemn High Holidays in contrast with the festivals only reveals Jewish attitudes today. Dr. Gaster also tries to lighten the load of Jewish suffering by distinguishing between oppressions brought about by discrimination and anti-Semitism and those which are the lot of all—as groups and individuals in society.

The freedom with which Dr. Gaster discusses the theories he presents, even if they may not be conclusive, is enormously stimulating. When Judaism is accepted as a historical process and not a "philosophical formula," it can attract creative minds and sensitive spirits as it has in the past. Rigidity, on the other hand, excludes free spirits. Judaism, as we know, has often run the risk of dying of suffocation in the embrace of those who loved it too dearly.

Festivals of the Jewish Year offers many things to many people. One who already appreciates the festivals can find new insights into their meaning. Those who purposely separate themselves from Judaism will not be able to ignore Dr. Gaster's honesty, scholarship, and respect for Jewish thought. Those who simply do not know will find this a fascinating first book with a bibliography for further study and an index of the poetry that is lavishly quoted in translation from the Ashkenazic and Sephardic prayer books. Few people will be able to read the book without reevaluating their views about Judaism and the world in which it has developed. Dr. Gaster writes with the belief that without such reevaluation, no commitment is possible for many modern Jews. Few recent books contribute more to opening the way for such commitment.

The Fascist Boobs

DIE VERLORENE LEGION. By LEON DEGRELLE. Stuttgart, Veritas Verlag. 509 pp.

Reviewed by H. L. TREFOUSSE

THE appearance of the memoirs (translated into German from a still unpublished French original) of Leon Degrelle, leader of the pre-war fascist Rexist movement in Belgium and commander of the Walloon Legion that fought by the side of the Nazis on the Eastern front, focuses attention on the international nature of Hitlerism. How was it that Nazi fascism, an ideology based on exaggerated nationalism—nay, on Pan-Germanism—could be exported to so many other countries? Why, in spite of their professed super-patriotism, were Quislings so ready to betray their own countries at Hitler's behest?

The answer given by Degrelle to explain his own case has to be pieced together by the reader. Endless sanguinary details of infantry fighting, repetitious descriptions of heroic Walloons killing and being killed by Red soldiers, take up most of the 509 pages. Even as military history, these battle scenes contribute very little to our knowledge of what happened in Russia between

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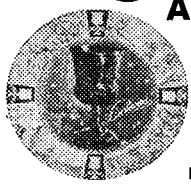

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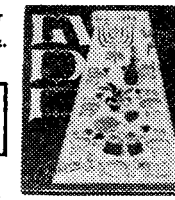

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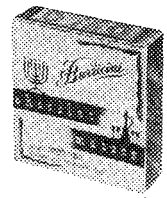

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1941 and 1944. The author is not interested in over-all strategic considerations—or professes not to be—and deals almost exclusively with what happened before his eyes in his own small sector. Undoubtedly a brave soldier, he fought for a cause which ten out of eleven of his countrymen considered high treason; but he retracts nothing and excuses himself only indirectly. In a few poorly written paragraphs, he merely reiterates his conviction that he fought for "European civilization" against "Asiatic hordes." To him, apparently, Hitler represented Europe. And for this "Europe" three thousand of the six thousand Belgians Degrelle recruited into his legion gave their lives.

What Degrelle leaves unsaid is infinitely more significant than what he says. A misfit in civilian society, he found his vocation in slaughter. The Nazi glorification of militarism and complete rejection of the values of ordinary civilized society promised fulfillment of secret yearnings. Nazism was essentially a puerile faith, and Degrelle had never fully outgrown his adolescence.

For Degrelle, Hitlerism was no mere matter of party affiliation or political program, but gave meaning to an otherwise barren life and justification for a constitutional inability to make value judgments. It did not matter to Degrelle that Hitler's agents had long backed the Flemings—who, speaking a Germanic tongue, were considered "racial brothers"—against the Walloons in a thinly disguised effort to destroy the Belgian state. His disregard of this is of a piece with his incapacity to resent Hitler's irresponsible military decisions, which the Walloon Legion paid for in blood. If Degrelle were to put it to himself this way he would have to recognize that the blood of the men he recruited and led into hopeless battles rested on his head too.

Though Degrelle first won notice as a political leader, he found out—like every "natural-born" fascist—that he was not interested fundamentally in political problems or political solutions. This is why fascism's disastrous inability to solve anything, even for fascists themselves, does not compromise it in his own eyes. True, having burned his bridges behind him, having led several thousand fellow Belgians to wanton deaths in a cause not their own, he cannot admit to himself or the world that he was misled. But also, he does not really feel that Hitler misled him, or that the Nazi leadership is to be blamed for the incompetence and irresponsibility, political, military, and otherwise,

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by which it brought on its own—and Degrelle's —defeat.

THIS is important to grasp in trying to understand the mentality of the people who form the "cadres" of fascism. At bottom they are often unpolitical beings—in politics, but not of it, lacking any sense of what politics can and can't do, in any case asking of it not practical achievements, but personal satisfaction: the chance to shine in public, self-importance, conspicuous activity. But these are to be got in truly serious politics only as by-products, not as ends in themselves. And those who seek them as ends in themselves will, if they persist and if circumstances are propitious, win them perhaps for a moment—but only for a moment; the larger the victory the greater the likelihood of the final catastrophe.

This little captain, Degrelle, this nonentity of perverted political ambition now decaying in Spanish exile (to which he escaped the day the war ended), makes the point as well as any of the larger luminaries of fascism. They paid for their misuse of politics and their irresponsibility with death; but before they died they succeeded in making it clear that, like Degrelle, they were boobs—vicious, murderous, and more important boobs, but boobs nonetheless. And, because they were boobs, more fatal in the end to their followers than to their enemies.

Twenty-six Generations Before Genesis

THE ALPHABET OF CREATION. An Ancient Legend from the Zohar, with Drawings by Ben Shahn. Pantheon. 48 pp. $5.00.

Reviewed by LEO STEINBERG

THE ALPHABET OF CREATION is a legend from the *Zohar*, the mystic "Book of Splendor," written in the 13th century, which, claiming a more ancient authorship, imposed itself on later generations with almost Scriptural authority. In the passage of revealed truth from the divine to man, the *Zohar* ranked second only to Torah and Talmud.

The present extract has been freely adapted by Ben Shahn, one of America's outstanding Jewish artists. His slender text and forty drawings recount the rivalry among the letters of the alphabet for the glory of initiating the Creation.

Mr. Shahn's pictures run through a generous iconographic range. There is a hand of God amidst an undulent morphology of wave or cloud; a lion rampant with extruded tongue; an Evil Inclination loosed from some romanesque façade; Falsehood, triple-faced and harpy-winged; a curlicue menorah and a golden calf; a tablet-flaunting Moses—horned in accordance with the Greek and Latin mistranslations of a Hebrew text (Ex. 34:29); and the face of the Merciful, rendered like a modern victim of merciless persecution.

The sum is an uneasy fellowship of modern, folk, and medieval; archaeology stalks by on feet of Klee, and proletarians alternate with romanesque grotesques. The unifying thread is given by the artist's penmanship. His line throughout is drawn with dexterous gaucherie, with quaint suggestions of untutored authenticity.

Perhaps the most successful part of the illustrations are the letters themselves. Raw and giant-shaped, they make up an invented paleography, wrung from the deep, as it were, and barely cypherable. Their every jot carves itself strenuously into existence, like a swath of weary energy pushed through a hindering medium. These forms which, being formed, visibly hate to rest, these heaving aboriginal configurations are a far cry from the grave, serried squares of common Hebrew fonts. But we must remember that Shahn's story is set twenty-six generations before Genesis, which antedates by a considerable margin the invention of standard movable type.

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This *I Believe*

by Lao Tzu*

As for those who would take the whole world
To tinker it as they see fit,
I observe that they never succeed:
For the world is a sacred vessel
Not made to be altered by man.
The tinker will soil it;
Usurpers will lose it.

For indeed there are things
That must move ahead,
While others must lag;
And some that feel hot,
While others feel cold;
And some that are strong,
While others are weak;
And vigorous ones,
With others worn out.

So the Wise Man discards
Extreme inclinations
To make sweeping judgments
Or to a life of excess.

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*THE WAY OF LIFE
A new translation of the *Tao Tê Ching*, by R. B. Blakney
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There is indeed a deal to be remembered and forgotten before any perusal of this book. Certain spiritual exercises may be recommended. The first will be to purge our minds of all we know about the current use of Hebrew letters for profane contemporary tasks. Second, we must forget our impious knowledge about the derivation of the Hebrew alphabet from Phoenician, hieroglyphic, or generally pictographic roots. More fitting is it to recall the Talmudic tale (told by Rav in the tractate *Manukhot*) that when Moses came to Heaven he found God engaged in plaiting crowns for the members of the *aleph beth*. Improbable, you say? Then you are caught still in the paganry of ancient Greece and modern science. For neither Eros nor hydrogen atoms, but the letters of the alphabet are the true firsts among the cosmic powers. "God drew them, hewed them, combined them, weighed them, interchanged them, and through them produced the whole Creation," says the Cabbala.

Thirdly, we must shed all speculative notions about conventional signs and their function. For in the words of the anonymous author of the mystic *Sha'are Tsedek* ("Gates of Justice") of 1295, "in the order of ascent is the cleansing of one's soul from all other sciences which one has studied. . . . Being naturalistic and limited, they contaminate the soul, and obstruct the passage through it of the divine forms."

This done, we will consider that Hebrew is the primordial speech of man and God, and that its letters remain ever holy. By way of confirmation we consult a page or two of Dante's *De Vulgari Eloquentia* ("Of Common Speech") whereof the following is a brief sample: "We ought to investigate to whom of mankind speech was first given, and what was the first thing he said, and to whom, where, and when he said it, and also in what language this first speech came forth." Dante concludes that "a certain form of speech was created by God together with the first soul. . . . This form every tongue of speaking men would use, if it had not been dissipated by the fault of man's presumption. . . . Therefore Hebrew was the language which the lips of the first speaker formed."

Armed with Dante's findings we turn at last to his (and the *Zohar's*) contemporary, the Spanish Cabbalist Abraham ben Samuel Abulafia —whose doctrine is fully expounded in Gershom Scholem's indispensable *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*. Abulafia's aim is to "unseal the soul, to untie the knots which bind it," that is, to release it from the tyranny of self, of wilfulness, of perceived natural forms.

But how shall the soul pierce the shell of natural things to know the unembodied, ultimate reality, the divine light? Mysticism being always practical and operational, the question is by what discipline the soul shall be trained for its ascent. What object shall be contemplated that will not hoop the soul in its own pinching finitude? What is there that can present itself as a spiritual substance—pure, wholly undetermined, infinite? The Christian mystic meditated on the Passion; Abulafia finds his diaphanous non-object—the only Real which, like God, has the perfection of immateriality—in the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. They alone compose the inmost spiritual reality, the pure thought of God.

We PAUSE to ponder the enormity of their significance. Almost ready—with bated breath and well-washed hands—we open Mr. Shahn's new book, a signed collector's item printed in Emerson type on Rives mold-made paper. And there on page one we learn how the twenty-two letters of the alphabet are engraved with a pen of flaming fire on the crown of God, whence they descend, one by one and page by page, to stake their claims in the Creation.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

PETER MEYER is an authority on Central European politics and international Communism.

ISAAC ROSENFELD's latest book, *King Solomon and Other Stories*, was recently published by McCosh and Sherman (Minneapolis).

EDWARD N. SAVETH is the author of *American Historians and European Immigrants;* he teaches American history at the New School for Social Research.

SYLVIA ROTHCHILD, a resident of Sharon, Massachusetts, has written numerous stories and articles on Jewish life for our pages.

H. L. TREFOUSSE, an instructor in history at Brooklyn College, is the author of *Germany and American Neutrality, 1939-41*.

LEO STEINBERG has written on art for *Partisan Review, Sewanee Review,* and other publications.

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An Intimate View of Four Presidents

BY VICE ADMIRAL WILSON BROWN, USN (RET.). Cal Coolidge got visibly seasick *(left)* but enjoyed his job more than Hoover. With F.D.R. life at the White House, at sea and at conferences like Yalta was a series of adventures. In a 30,000-word condensation of a brilliant, unpublished memoir, Admiral Brown, who was Naval Aide to four presidents – from Coolidge to Truman – throws fresh light on history, on the last days of Roosevelt, and on the private lives of the men he served.

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The Hanging of John Brown

AN EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT SUPPRESSED FOR 95 YEARS. "Porte Crayon" Strother stood at the foot of the scaffold when the "awful majesty of the law" was executed on the angry prophet of freedom; he reported the fascinating events of Brown's last hours for *Harper's Weekly*. But the story was suppressed. Here, for its deep historical interest, is a strange "lost" manuscript, with explanatory notes by a Brown expert. Among the illustrations is the sketch *(left)* made by Strother.

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Each issue of American Heritage seeks out fresh manuscript material of this kind, for its importance and its excitement.

How Good Is Our "Primitive" Folk Art?

A DISSENTING OPINION FROM JAMES THOMAS FLEXNER. Much as many Americans, not excepting leading collectors and museums, cherish the awkward early native art disgorged from old attics and barns – praising it as the real,"honest" art of this country – most of it is nonsense. Or so suggests this leading art historian in a provocative analysis of the "cult of the primitives." Handsomely illustrated in color.

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Salem Wins a Fortune in the Far Indies

YANKEE ADVENTURERS IN THE CHINA TRADE. This article, lavishly illustrated in color from the great seafaring art collection of the Peabody Museum, recreates the era of the merchant princes of Old Salem and of adventure along the Pepper Coast and the wharves of Canton. Salem's bold sailors, one of whom appears on the cover *(above)*, plucked the treasure of the Indies and created America's first millionaires. Written by Charles H. P. Copeland of the Peabody Museum.

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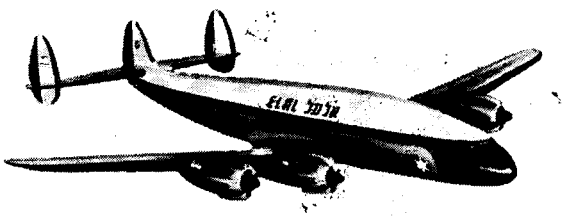

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